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MAY

Adventure

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BY SIDNEY HERSCHEL SMALL

THE STEAMBOAT BREED
by ALLAN R. BOSWORTH

DONALD BARR CHIDSEY

CARL D. LANE *AND OTHERS*

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◆◆◆ THE JUNE ISSUE WILL

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

Vol. 111, No. 1 for May, 1944 Best of New Stories

NOVELETTES

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To the heart of dimmed-out Tokyo's geisha quarter, a steel chain around his neck and cavorting like a dancing bear, goes Lew Davies—masquerading as the Ainu pariah, Koropok—to turn Baron Koragi's subtle bid for the friendship of his distinguished Philippine guests into a blood bath.

A Shift in the Wind ..... H. S. M. KEMP 80

With a thousand square miles of bush and muskeg to patrol, you'd think Corporal Chadburn, R.C.M.P., had enough to keep him busy in his own territory without cooking up murders in another officer's district to solve in his spare time.

SHORT STORIES

Jonathan's Falcon ..... LESTER DENT 28

A waterlogged spritsail spar in the middle of the Caribbean is no place for a goshawk. Jonathan told the bird as much. "You are a fool, Moloch!" he said. Which is no way to talk, even to a falcon, when he's going to be your only companion in misery for five long days.

Pearls Without Price ..... CARL CLAUSEN 37

McTurk had ideas of his own on the subject of licenses and tariffs. He considered that the seas belonged to anybody who was man enough to sail 'em—which meant McTurk. And that the things which swam, scuttled or just sat therein—pearl oysters, for instance—belonged to him who got there first. And that usually meant McTurk, too!

The Steamboat Breed (an off-the-trail story) ..... ALLAN R. BOSWORTH 44

This war is too young for legends and anyway, it's the fashion these days to hail people who explode myths rather than those who create them. Take Eb Hotchkiss, for instance, and what he saw on Attu. When he started to tell his story, the doctor gave him a shot in the arm. That shows how skeptical we have become.

Officer of the Day ..... DONALD BARR CHIDSEY 50

Regulations were regulations and if he had to be a soldier, damn it, he'd do a good job. Even if every moment on the transport was agony magnified a thousandfold.

Paved with Good Intentions ..... KEITH EDGAR 69

Crazy McIntosh, the old coot, is the meanest, most cantankerous, bad-tempered, sarcastic hogger on ten divisions.. So I would have to go and fall for his daughter Peggy. Me, I'm the world's worst brakeman—according to Crazy—and equally lousy as a prospective son-in-law. So you see why every run I make with the ornery old mule is what might be called a "hard luck" trip.

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BE OUT ON MAY 10TH ◆◆◆

Gunner Jones and the Military Medal..... KIMBALL McILROY 75
You'd think anyone could get a simple five-word message straight. But not Jones. He garbled everything—including the colonel's orders to attack—and the medal hit his chest like a penny from heaven.

SERIALS

Jezebel the Jeep (1st of 2 parts)..... FAIRFAX DOWNEY 10
There was nothing backward about Jezzy but her reverse gear. From the moment she came off the assembly line till she disintegrated in a cloud of nuts and bolts on a Sicilian battlefield, she went places and did things, the envy of every WAC, WAVE and WAAF in North Africa. But they, of course, didn't have Johnny Johansen to drive 'em around and show 'em about life.

Sign of Fire (Conclusion)..... E. HOFFMANN PRICE 92
Jim Kane stood against a stone wall in the courtyard of Japanese headquarters, Colonel Higashi's cigar clamped between his teeth. The colonel had spent a good many years spying in the United States and knew the American custom of a hearty breakfast and a good smoke for the condemned before execution. Now Higashi raised his sword, shots rang out—and hell broke loose in Iloilo. But not quite the kind the colonel had planned.

FACT STORIES

Quiet Flowed the Columbia..... HECTOR CHEVIGNY 107
Her name was Anna Petrovna and she was the first white woman to set foot on the Pacific Coast north of California. If Vassili Tarakanov had attended to his colonizing, instead of hunting for her in the wilderness, the flag of the Astor fur empire might never have flown along the Columbia and Seattle might have been a Russian port today.

Steam Over Superior..... R. A. EMBERG 118
When Jack Averill decided it was time for the first steamship to sail across our biggest sweetwater ocean he had to fight Congress and the United States Army, as well as vested private interests, before the boilers of the *Independence* could even be warmed.

Backhouse Battleship..... CARL D. LANE 125
She was without doubt the damnedest craft ever set afloat, but the Yankee belly-laugh that went up after her first and only engagement paved the way for the fall of Vicksburg.

VERSE

Salute to a New Star..... DOW RICHARDSON 91
This is the tale of the San Francisco,
This is the yarn of a ship for you.

DEPARTMENTS

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Cover painted for Adventure by Charles Dye
Kenneth S. White, Editor

IF YOUR COPY OF THIS MAGAZINE IS LATE—

We regret that, due to the difficulties of wartime transportation, your *Adventure* may sometimes be a little late in reaching you. If this should happen, your patience will be appreciated. Please do not write complaining of the delay. It occurs after the magazine leaves our offices and is caused by conditions beyond our control.

—The Publishers.

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

SIXTEEN pages of *Adventure* are off to war this month, enlisted for the duration or until such time as the nation's paper stockpile becomes large enough to fill normal civilian demands as well as the abnormal but infinitely more urgent military needs. You all know how vitally important it is to conserve paper these days. We are glad to be able to do our share—and still, oddly enough, be able at the same time to publish *more* words in every issue than we did before the amputation. It took a deal of planning but we managed it by narrowing margins a bit and using a slightly smaller type-face. You'll be surprised to learn —and as pleased, too, we hope, as we ourselves were—that there are actually almost ten thousand more words in *Adventure* this month than we were able to print in the 164-page April issue! More stories—more articles—more departmental features than have appeared between these covers in a good many years. We hope you enjoy them—every one—and can manage to make your own paper-saving as painless and pleasant as we have ours.

AND now to introduce the quartet of recruits who sign their first-enlistment papers with our Writers' Brigade this month. Not a rooky among 'em. Seasoned campaigners all, but on other fronts up to now. Our worse luck! We're glad to welcome them to this camp-fire and hope they'll sit around many a future one.

Hector Chevigny, who wrote "Quiet Flowed the Columbia," tosses the first chunk on the blaze. He says—

You may safely treat the piece as factually pretty authentic. It may seem strange that, in a region such as western Washington where local historical societies abound and a good many old-timers devote themselves rather fanatically to preserving the minutiae of the past, that the story of the first white woman actually to set foot on those shores is virtually unknown, but as a matter of fact I have actually altered the pattern of the original yarn very little. The story is told, and quite completely, in a four-volume work published under the auspices of the Imperial Admiralty in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1861. The Russian title is "Materialui dlya istorii Russkikh zaselenii po beregam Vostotchnavo Okeana" ("Materials for a History of the Russian Settlements on the Eastern Ocean"). The only repetition, or exposition, of it I've ever seen in English is a handwritten translation, by Ivan Petroff, at the Bancroft Collection of Russian-American Papers, at the University of California at Berkeley, and a rehash and condensation done for the Washington State Historical Quarterly by Clarence Andrews in the issue of January, 1922. Andrews titled his essay "The Wreck of the St. Nicholas."

In the original Russian, the hunter Tarakanov has presumably written it as a reminiscence, but his name is given as Timofei (Timothy) Tarakanov. I've changed that first name to Vassili, for I feel certain it's the same Tarakanov who subsequently was captured by the Spanish in 1813 and spent three years a prisoner at Santa Barbara mission. (That story is told in reminiscence form too, and it's another good yarn.)

It is elsewhere established that Captain Nikolai Bulygin came to New Archangel with his young wife and the story of the rescue of the survivors

(Continued on page 8)

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(Continued from page 6)

from Makah Village below Cape Flattery is corroborated by the letters of Captain John Ebbets, Astor's agent, who was in Sitka harbor with a ship when Captain Brown came in with the survivors.

The reasons for the *Nikolai's* sailing, the circumstances of the wreck, the tussle at the Indian village, the manner of Anna Petrovna's capture, and all the rest of the pattern to the end are, almost word for word, from the original. What the men wore, however, and all that, I've supplied, from knowledge gained in previous research in Russian America. Candidly, however, the affair took a different turn from that I gave it—Anna Petrovna preferred her Indian husband to Captain Bulygin; she told her husband that Utramaka was "a better man." This, though, seemed to me a little strong for commercial use, and I toned it down.

As for a personal note, there's little to tell; little, that is, with any great color. I am a professional writer, mostly in Hollywood radio, with past stories in the *Post, Liberty, Collier's* and two books to my credit, as the incautious phrase has it. Both books, "Lost Empire" and the recent "Lord of Alaska," are on the subject of early Russian days in Alaska. That subject has been my preoccupation for the past eleven years. I began research into it in 1932, at the suggestion of the late great Edmond Meany, longtime professor of Pacific History at the University of Washington, who told me that "it is the greatest undiscovered field for a writer in the whole of American history." I took his word for it, and found it was true: to even those well-versed in American history it come as somewhat of a shock to hear that Russia controlled more than 3,000 miles of American coast for 125 years and, what's more, colonized much of it and maintained, at Sitka, the first going seaport the white man had on the whole coast of western North America.

We haven't read either of Mr. Chevigny's books but plan to before long. The period and background in which he has steeped himself so thoroughly has always fascinated us and we have regretted there has not been more published material available about it. Stewart Edward White's novel, "Pole Star," is a stirring fictionalized portrait of Baranov. Others interested in his dramatic career would, we are sure, find it absorbing.

LESTER DENT has sailed the same seas Jude and Jonathan did in his unusual yarn about Moloch, the saltwater goshawk. He confesses—

Once upon a time, before the world got its current headache, I bought a little schooner, and lived on her for about four years. She was a little old hag of the sea, that hooker, with a plumb bow, a beam like a pregnant squaw, and a lot of tumblehome amidships. She was a good sea boat, though, even if she did sail as stiff as a witch's broom, and always leak around the shaft-log. Her name was the *Albatross*. I didn't like her name, but I was afraid to change it, because somebody told me it would surely be bad luck. After I caught an agriculturist who didn't know much about boats, and sold her to him, I heard a reef off Haiti got her, God rest her oak and teak bones. He had changed her name.

I wasn't born in Wyoming, but I grew up there, on the 4-J cow ranch, and the nearest water, it always seemed to me, was the Burlington railroad pond in Gillette. That was fifty miles away. Everyone who grows up in that dry-as-bone country gets an enormous yen for boats and the sea. That might be why I like them.

But what I'm getting around to is this: This yarn, "Jonathan's Falcon," has a legitimate background, which my stories don't always have. One day we worked the schooner in behind the reef and went ashore on a little island in the Caribbean. Most of the inhabitants there were hawks, or rather an English species of falcon. The natives had a story about a pirate, who was also a falconer, bringing them there in the good old bloody days. Later I learned a little about hawking. So the yarn is quite legitimate.

I incidentally expended nearly two years hunting for pirate treasure in the Caribbean, and actually found the galleon we were hunting. In it was supposed to be a gold table of nearly three tons weight—just a trifling sum of three or four million dollars. We blew the hell out of that galleon, taking it apart a splinter at a time, all but the sterncastle, then a little pup of a hurricane piled us on the reef one night. When I got the schooner off, I got out of there and never went back. The table may be there. I'm not as curious about it as I was.

Anyway, the world has a lot more in the way of excitement right now. We were in Austria when they went in there, and in Czechoslovakia, then Berlin, and damned glad to get out. I'm cleared as a war correspondent, but certainly haven't done anything sensational with that. I wish the world would quiet down so I could get more writing done.

I'm thirty-nine, six feet two, two hundred pounds, married, easily frightened by physical work. My father and mother went to Wyoming in a covered wagon, and actually had to shoot at a few Indians and horse-thieves. My grandfather was a pot-washer in the Civil War, and his grandfather was a pot-washer in the Revolutionary War. I'm probably in the wrong business.

WE WISH we knew more about Kimball McIlroy but like so many of our writers these days, the author of "Gunner Jones and the Military Medal" is temporarily out of reach of typewriters and such and undoubtedly has more important things to do anyhow than answer letters from inquisitive editors. All we could glean about him came to us in a brief wire from Mrs. McI. Her husband, she says, was born in 1915 in New York City, graduated from Lawrenceville School, moved to Toronto in 1933, since then engaged in free lance writing and radio work, joined Canadian Army 1941, married '42—now overseas.

There you have it in a nutshell!

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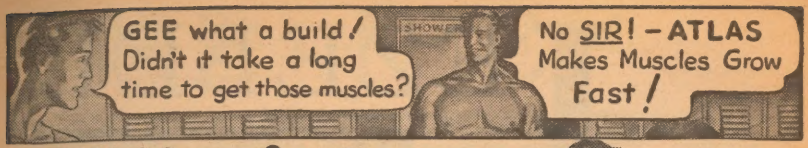

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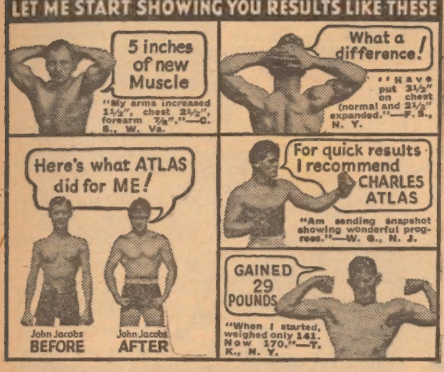
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JEZEBEL

By
FAIRFAX DOWNEY

Buoyed up by the tarpaulin beneath and around her, Jezebel floated like any shipshape little barge while Johnny and the others paddled away frantically.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES DYE

HER name was not always Jezebel. It was changed to that much later in her career. At first she had no name at all, only a number well up in the hundred thousands—you know how they turn out jeeps at Detroit. Originally Jezzy was, to be formal, *Number So-and-So Truck, Cargo, ¼-ton, U. S. Army Model.* It was presumed that she had no individuality and that she had just rolled off the assembly line with a multitude of identical twins.

No supposition could be further from the truth. Jezebel was a Jeep of jeeps.

The birth of jeeps is an interesting event, regarded from a wholesale angle. But the arrival of Jezebel was no ordinary *accouchement.*

THE JEEP

She proved to be more than just another mechanical war baby. Men on the assembly line still recall the occasion when she first saw the light of day. They say that if other jeeps could be produced as fast as Jezebel was, there would be a jeep for every soldier in all the Allied armies. Which would have suited every soldier in all the Allied armies fine, especially the infantry.

The men on the line must have had a grand sleep the night before and have been feeling fit that day. Everything clicked, including Jezebel's parts. She took form with extraordinary rapidity, even for that speeded-up beehive of industry. It must have been imagination, but the men swore that every nut, bolt, and gadget seemed to leap into place, virtually unaided. Jezebel was in a hurry to be born. She almost pushed the jeep ahead of her off the line.

Her sturdy chassis was complete in no time at all. Rapidly it acquired the wheels which would take her through the toughest sort of going—the stout engine and battery which would cause the spark of life to course through her circuits—the bright, round headlight eyes which so many would find dazzling. She was given a top (usually to be left behind in the repair shop when it rained) and seat cushions hard as the heart of a collector of internal revenue.

There are some peculiar types of workmen

"Dear Jonathan, I want you to be the first to know that—" the letter began ominously.

in that and other war plants these days: split-shift men who practice polite professions when their eight hours on the assembly line are over. Even so, it sounded odd when one mechanic in greasy overalls, noting Jezebel's astounding progress, suddenly quoted Shakespeare:

Know ye that MacDuff
Was from his mother's womb untimely ripped.

Indeed Jezebel's nativity seemed like that. Decidedly she was a hustler and undoubtedly it was that Yankee characteristic which influenced the workman whose duty it was to screw plates on the dash—plates describing the gear shifts and other informative data. Some of those plates were in English and some in French, some in Russian or Chinese characters.

"This here jeep's a Yank," announced the workman and acted accordingly.

The squat, unlovely contours of the little truck took form. She was no thing of beauty, this Jezebel, yet she and all her kind would be beloved by all men. Scarcely a soldier but would want a jeep for his very own after the war.

The chief inspector himself took Jezebel, duly born, off the line. He slapped her on the steering wheel button, and she squawked lustily. He turned her lights on and she winked at him. He switched on her ignition, and she warmed to him; in fact, she fairly purred at him the second he touched the self-starter. There was nothing backward about Jezebel but her reverse gear. He took her out on a test run and could hardly hold her down to the speed proper to her tender age.

Considering her speediness, she might have been earmarked for some general, generals constantly being in a hurry to get somewhere. However, that did seem a trifle silly. One might, conceivably, select a blooded charger for a general but not a jeep. Consequently Jezebel was permitted to become part of a consignment being shipped to a training camp.

Jezebel came to camp perched with five other jeeps on the curved back of a long automobile-carrier truck, looking for all the world like a mobile segment of a roller-coaster. It was an undignified entrance and Jezebel felt it keenly. However, they soon slid her off, and her esteem was restored when a motor sergeant, obviously picking her as the likeliest of the lot, barked, "Johansen, take this here one to drive the captain in."

JEZEBEL and the lad who drove her took to each other at once. They were suited to each other, they were compatible, they were *simpatico*. One speaks of a rider and his horse understanding each other and of the former sitting the latter "like he grew there." So this driver and his jeep seemed to merge into a mechanical centaur.

In time a portion of the Army of the United States would speak familiarly of Jezebel and Jonathan—which sounded rather like Biblical skullduggery. But that was after Jezzy became Jezzy. At first she was given an appellation which was a pale counterpart of her final one. Believe it or not, and it is hard to credit considering this particular jeep's obstreperous characteristics, she was originally christened "Dorothea."

It is a custom in the Army, when fussy commanding officers do not interfere, for a driver to name his jeep as he wills. It goes without saying that he names her after his best girl and paints that beloved monicker above the hood just under the windshield for all to behold. 'Twas even so knights of old bound the scarves of their ladies fair around their helmets and spurred their chargers into the fray. Similarly favored and proclaiming it in blazonry, jeep drivers step on it and dash into anything and everything, and damned be he who first cries, "Hold, enough!" The war has witnessed charges, sorties, assaults, and melées where the steeds were jeeps named "Frances," "Emilene," "Mamie," "Baby Doll," and even, vulgarly, "Miss Carriage."

Jonathan painted "Dorothea" in white on the olive drab façade of his jeep, fondly and lovingly. But, alas, he had only driven proudly around camp a few times, acknowledging his liege lady, when that untoward event occurred which resulted in a sudden and shocking revision.

Jonathan had had himself photographed in the driver's seat, beaming above the scarcely

dry "Dorothea" and was preparing to send that token to the girl of his dreams when a letter from her arrived.

Ominously it began, "I want you to be the first to know (as a matter of fact, Jonathan was about the thirty-seventh to know) that" —well, you know the rest. To add insult to injury, the hated and successful rival was revealed to be a corporal of Marines—of all things.

Jonathan gulped, turned red and furiously tore up the letter. He would have sworn but he could think of no original swear words at the moment, and he always strove to be original. He considered swearing by the Nine Gods like Lars Porsena of Clusium, or cutting them down to Andy Jackson's "By the Eternal!" But words failed him. He only stared miserably for a while at his jeep and her name. Contemplating him, even that hardened and vehement vehicle melted in sympathy and shed a few hot tears from her radiator.

Pfc. Johansen was a man of action. He spent little time wasting in despair. He hied him to the supply sergeant, borrowed some O. D. and white paint and went to work.

"And I thought of marrying that girl!" he muttered to himself. He wielded the paintbrush viciously, effacing the name and—so he fatuously imagined—the memory of the faithless Dorothea. "Damn good thing for me she broke her promise. A girl that throws a fellow over like that after what she said and all there's been between us—and me away doing my duty in the Army—and a blasted gyrene barging in in his blues with a couple of yellow stripes on his sleeves—and—hell! I know the kind of a wife she'd make!"

With a flash of inspiration, he painted in JEZEBEL.

Duly re-christened, the jeep Jezebel stood proud, shameless and tickled pink. First to notice the change in the jeep's name was Captain Alexander Sands. That tall officer was an observing fellow. The commander of a battery of field artillery must be. He was also discreet. He looked from the new name to his driver. Under the thatch of very blond hair inherited from a Swedish strain in his ancestry, Jonathan's boyish, ingenuous face was reddening. China-blue eyes reflected a self-conscious expression. He looked away from Sands towering above him, but the captain said only, "Like this new name better. Straight out of the Bible and has nice alliteration, too. Jezebel the Jeep. So be it."

Next to remark on the alteration was Terence Murphy, the motor sergeant. Terence was wizened and with the stamp of Ireland on him. He was older than he had sworn he was when he enlisted, having served in the last war with a horse-drawn artillery outfit. His secret attitude toward motorized artillery was that of an old-time coachman who, when

"So it's Jezebel, is it now?" Sergeant Murphy snorted. "It's a fickle lad ye are, Johansen."

the horses were sold and the carriages relegated to the barn corner and cobwebs, had perforce to learn to drive the family car. To him motors just didn't seem to jibe with the dash of field artillery, though he knew automobiles inside and out, having run a small garage for years.

"Jezebel is it now?" Murphy snorted. "It's a fickle lad ye are, Johansen. Best be getting wan iv thim brackets with cards ye can change, like on a calendar. Thin ye won't be wasting paint ivry time ye get a new girl."

"This name is going to stick," announced Jonathan firmly.

"Till ye take up with a prettier girl thin this here Jezebel," the other prophesied. "Ye'll forget her thin and 'twill be as if she were dead and gone."

"She is dead and gone—long ago."

"Tch-tchk," clucked Sergeant Murphy. "'Tis only a be-u-tiful mimory ye named the jeep after thin. What did she die of, poor girl?"

"She got shoved out of a window, and 'the dogs ate Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.'"

"Holy Mither iv—what'd she done?"

"She was a hellion married to a king named Ahab. She got him into all kinds of trouble. Persuaded him to bump off prophets and people who had property he wanted to get hold of. Finally he got killed in battle. When the next king came along, Jezebel 'painted her face and tired her head'—that means she got all dolled up for him. Then she leaned out the window as he rode by and gave him the glad eye."

"Was she still good looking?" inquired Murphy with interest.

"Sure, but this new King Jehu knew that beauty is only skin deep—and that's the truth, I want to tell you. So he yelled up to throw her out, and they did, and she actually, as well as figuratively, went to the dogs."

"Wurra," Murphy lamented, "and her a fine figure of a woman."

"Anyway," Jonathan ended, "it's all in the Bible."

"Ah," said Murphy, relieved, "but it sounds a pity."

"It goes to show," Jonathan observed severely, "what trouble a man can get into by marrying the wrong woman—or any woman at all, to my way of thinking. That's why I named the jeep Jezebel. To remind me."

"Ye'll be changing your mind," the motor sergeant predicted. "But I'm not after caring whativer ye call the jeep jist so ye kape her maintenance up and don't wreck her with no wild driving. But I kind iv like the ither name. You see, my son's been writing he has a swateheart named Dorothea, and a be-u-tiful girl she is."

"You've got a son, Sergeant? Why, I didn't know that."

"Sure and he's a corporal in the Marines."

Motor Sergeant Murphy had turned away. It was as well he missed the look of berserk fury which gleamed in the eyes of Pfc. Jonathan W. Johansen.

The look seemed to be reflected in the headlights of Jezzy the Jeep. It was as if she wanted to whisper wickedly, "Johnny, you and I'll take the old man for a ride some day. When, as, and if he comes back, he'll be in such shape that a certain corporal of Marines will have to be allotting most of his pay for the support of a dependent parent!"

CHAPTER II

THE JOUSTING OF JEZEBEL

JEZEBEL was over her growing pains. She was a big girl now. In other words, her motor had been broken in and she was capable of speeding up to the limit. Only the 35-mile-an-hour restriction held her down and that not always. When Captain Sands was in a hurry to get from the rear to the head of his truck-drawn battery on the road and told Pfc. Johansen to let her out, Jezebel responded delightedly with a burst of rapid transit. Sandy road shoulder or muddy ditches didn't even give her pause. Johansen shifted her into four-wheel drive, or when the going was heavy, into auxiliary transmission, and she breezed through anything—*terra firma* or *terra infirma*.

The big two-and-one-half-ton trucks, filled with gun squads and ammunition, rolled along, drawing 105-mm. howitzers. On rolled the weapons carriers and the rather ponderous command cars which reminded one of a 1907 Model Pope-Toledo or an ancient Panhard. But it was the sprightly jeeps that put life and animation into the column, and Jezebel, the captain's car, was the queen bee.

This was modern, motorized artillery. Only a few old-timers like Sergeant Terence Murphy longed for the "good old days." Sometimes he could be heard softly humming the motorized version of *The Caisson Song:*

If our motors go dead,
Won't our faces all get red,
Motor trucks with the pieces hooked on.
For the foeman of course
Will shout at us, "Get a horse."
And the horses and caissons all gone.
Then it's hi-hi-hee,
The Field Artilleree.
Sound off your klaxons loud and strong.
No more we'll go
With a team in low,
If our motors keep buzzing along.

The motors did keep buzzing along. Terence was a good motor sergeant. He saw to that.

Jonathan had to admit Murphy's ability even now that he had discovered that the sergeant had warmed a viper in his bosom by fathering a certain marine corporal. Yet that was enough to wreck a promising friendship. "Like father, like son." Jonathan hadn't a doubt that Terence in his day had blighted some other young Irishman's romance by swiping his Dorothea or Bridget or whatever her name was.

There was the additional fact that Jonathan knew everything he knew about motors by precept and studying the manuals. Sergeant Terence knew them by experience and he hopped his drivers hard when they failed in some primary duty. There was the time that Jonathan forgot to fill Jezzy up with gas. At a critical moment—while the battery commander was out on a reconnaissance drive—she coughed and sputtered and stopped dead. Jonathan had her hood up and was fiddling futilely with the distributor and spark plugs when the motor sergeant arrived.

"Checked your gas, oil, and water before ye left the park, did ye?" he demanded. "No? I thought not. Look at that indicator! It's klane out iv gas ye are. And ye call yourself a driver!"

The discomfitted Jonathan said nothing. There was nothing to say.

Even so the two men might have gotten on if it had not been for that untoward happening one Sunday afternoon.

Jonathan had wandered down into the motor park. There stood Jezebel. Her motor was not running, but she was nevertheless quivering with indignation. In front of her was Murphy with a paintbrush in his hand.

"Johansen," said he, "I hope ye'll not be minding, but the name iv that woman, that hathan crature, ye gave the jeep has been on me conscience. I misdoubt the padre would like it. I've painted it out. Let's call her Dorothea again."

"Look here—" Jonathan burst out.

"Aisy, lad. Some other name if you like. But 'tis Dorothea I'm favoring. Me son kapes writing me about his swateheart iv the same name."

"That's my jeep," snapped Johnny. "I'll name her what I like. Give me that brush!"

"I'll not. 'Tis defacing government property ye'd be doing."

"Nuts! Every jeep in the army's got a name painted on. Be reasonable, Sarge. The original Jezebel painted her face, I told you, and—"

"And look what happened to her. 'Tis bad luck, I tell ye. Ye'll not hoodoo this outfit."

"Come off it. You may be superstitious but I'm not. Hand me that brush."

"On your way, soldier. I'm running this motor park."

There was a dangerous light now in Pfc. Johansen's blue eyes. The slow wrath of his Scandinavian blood rose in him. The ancient Irish must have seen the like of it when the dragon ships were beached on their shores, and Vikings landed, swords out.

"You've got three chevrons and a loop, and I've only got one stripe," he snapped. "That gives you no right to poke your nose into my personal business. If you weren't an old man—"

"Old man, is it?" Terence shouted. "Well, ye young Scanda-hoovian, I'll show ye what an old man can do!" He rolled back his sleeves and glared belligerently.

"O. K.," said Johnny. "You asked for it."

They mixed it in a flurry of fists. Jezebel seemed to watch with the same proudly malicious satisfaction her original would have displayed had Ahab stood up to the Prophet Elijah in a knock-down, drag-out fight.

Neither was a big man. They were well matched in size. The wiry Irishman had been seasoned in a hundred brawls. Johnny, young and hardened, attacked with fury. They slugged, ducked, dodged and slugged again. The younger man drew claret from the other's snub nose and in turn had a beautiful shanty hung on his left eye. They were panting—nearly out of breath—but they kept at it. Finally each was seized with the same brilliant idea at the same instant. They feinted with lefts to the head and swung hard with rights at breadbaskets.

Both emitted a vociferous "Woof!" and sat down hard, facing each other.

Suddenly Captain Sands was standing there, looking down at them.

I put the hex on scrubby shaves
With Thin Gillette, the blade that saves!
In record time my face feels swell
And looks right in the pink as well!
Precision-made to fit your Gillette Razor exactly
Gillette
BLADES
4 for 10¢
Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade

"That seems to be about enough," he remarked quietly. He eyed the paintbrush and the newly anonymous jeep. "I guess I know what it was about. Johansen, you'll do a week's KP for striking a non-com. Sergeant Murphy, paint the name back on. It's a driver's right to name his own jeep. It's up to you to see he keeps it in order.

"That's all. After this, better bring disputes to me or there'll be some sleeves around here minus stripes."

At the officer walked away, the two on the ground slowly regained their breath. They did not speak. Johnny moved toward the kitchen where a garbage rack awaited his ministrations. Terence picked up the paintbrush.

Soon Jezebel was herself again.

THE feud smouldered but did not break into flame. The participants were too busy. A large draft from the training camp had been called for—to proceed immediately to a secret destination. That meant a port of embarkation and overseas. The field artillery brigade, of which Captain Sands' battery was a part, was on the order. But not a soul in it—except the brigade commander—had an inkling of the true purport of the order. The movement was shrouded in hush-hush.

The brigade thought it was going to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for an intensive course of firing.

Both combatants emitted a vociferous "Woof!" and sat down hard. Suddenly Captain Sands was standing over them.

Unsuspecting, it entrained. Up the loading-ramps, day after day, rolled that amazingly long procession of vehicles and weapons which comprise a brigade of field artillery. The big trucks, the howitzers, and the smaller cars rolled from the ramp on to flat cars and gondolas.

Jezebel was sandwiched in between a towering truck and a reconnaissance car. In that situation she looked positively coy. Like the rest, her wheels were chocked and cleated and securely wired down to the bed of the railroad cars. Johnny saw to that under the watchful and malevolent eye of Sergeant Murphy. When the locomotive coupled on, Johnny and the rest of his battery loaded themselves into an assortment of Pullmans and day coaches.

Facts began to dawn on them gradually as they traveled and looked out the windows.

"If we're going to Sill," remarked Corporal Wicks, gunner of the first piece, "we sure are taking a roundabout way."

"I get it," said Johnny. "We're going by sea. Sail from an Atlantic port and land in New Orleans or Galveston and roll on up to Oklahoma."

They were going by sea—but not to any such destination.

They stared open-mouthed at the busy port where they detrained and saw little of it, for they arrived at night and were hustled aboard a transport, with orders to stay below decks. Stealth was the word. They were under wraps —incommunicado.

Yet not quite incommunicado. The mail orderly appeared on the transport in the morning, laden with sacks.

"Behold Santa Claus," he yelped. "Got this mail last thing before we left camp."

"Late as usual, in passing it out," called a critic.

"O. K., O. K. I got an idea you're going to have plenty of time to answer it."

The letters, grown extra precious now, were distributed. Lower sank the emptying sack until it was a limp, deflated thing. Johnny tried to hide his disappointment. Nothing from home, nothing from anybody. About to straighten up and fold the sack, the mail orderly groped in it and pulled out one last letter.

"Johansen!" he shouted.

The envelope was a familiar lavender. It announced itself from afar with the pungent, once-beloved fragrance of heliotrope.

Johnny grabbed it. Dorothea! What was the woman writing him for again!

He muttered angrily to himself, "I'll tear it into a thousand pieces and cast it to the four winds."

Curiosity—and other emotions—got the better of him. He opened the letter and read, interpolating with a series of objurgations and anathemas.

"Johnny, dear," it began. "Dorothea's conscience hurts her. (It sure ought to, ratting on me like that, but you haven't got a conscience nor a heart either.) It was hard to write you that last letter. After all, we've known each other a long time and had such good times together. (They cost me plenty and, believe you me, they come under a head of a lousy investment.)

"You know I wrote you about being engaged to a marine corporal. Well, he's handsome and awful nice, but I'm beginning to doubt if I really truly understand him. (Never mind, gal, I've got your number now.) He's stationed here at the Navy Yard and, would you believe it, he seems to be perfectly content to stay right here. He says we'll get married—I'm not so sure of that—and in good time he'll get around to going to war. (Thought that was the kind of guy you'd pick.)

"Johnny, you're not like that. You're *patriotic!* You're *noble!* (Oh, yeah!) For all I know, you may have gone off to war already. (You've got something there, kid.)

"They say it's a woman's privilege to change her mind. I'm afraid little me has—again. Johnny, boy, won't you write

Your Dorothea."

Pfc. Johansen sniffed, sneered, and snorted. "Never!" he vowed. He crumpled the letter savagely and made for the rail to commit it to the deep.

"Hey, Johnny," said Private Barnes, coming up beside him. "Look yonder what's going into the hold of that big freighter there across the dock."

Hoisted high by a big boom, a diminutive jeep was being swung inboard. Johnny caught sight of a name painted on her in fair white letters—JEZEBEL.

The sun glistened on Jezzy's headlights. Clearly she was flashing him a signal. As Johnny read it, it said, "What care you how fair she be? We're going across, kid, going overseas, and we're going to get us a batch of Germans!"

CHAPTER III

THE JOURNEYING OF JEZEBEL

IT WAS fated that Jezebel never would descend into the hold of the freighter across the dock. Before she could be lowered, bellows from officiating longshoremen halted her in midair. The hold was so full that not even a jeep could be squeezed in. Trucks and tanks cluttered up the decks, leaving not so much as an odd corner.

Back down on the dock went Jezzy and there she sat, not for an instant appearing forlorn and forsaken but furiously indignant like a high-spirited bride left at the church. If she had been an amphibious jeep, she would undoubtedly have plunged off the end of the dock and swum ahead of the convoy.

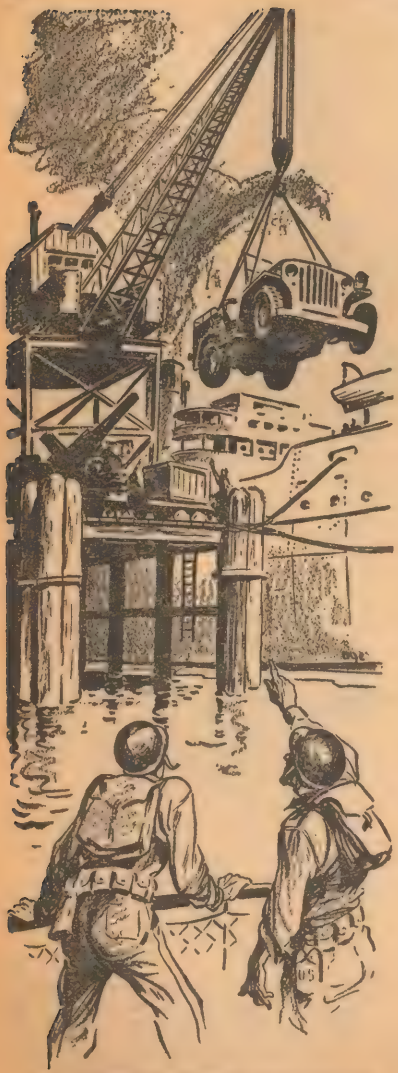
Johnny was not going to see his Jezzy treated that way.

He rushed off in search of Captain Sands and quickly found him.

"Sir," he burst out, "Private Johansen lacks the permission of the first sergeant to speak to the battery commander, but this is an emergency."

"All right," Sands grinned. "What's the matter?"

"Sir, they're fixing to leave Jezebel behind. They couldn't get her into the freighter, so they put her back on the dock, and someone will grab her away from us and—"



"Hey, Johnny," said Private Barnes. "Look yonder what's going into the freighter."

"They can't do that to our favorite jeep," Sands said. "I'll see if I can't do something about it."

He sought out the transport commander, a West Point classmate. Obligingly that officer found a spot for Jezebel on the deck of the transport where she was battered down, snugly covered with a tarpaulin, to the vast satisfaction of her driver.

The men packed below decks were for the most part unaware of their before-the-dawn sailing. They were sunk in an uneasy sleep down in the bowels of the ship—on "D" deck. In what had once been the tourist class dining-saloon.

Johnny's whole battery was crammed into four tiers of iron bunks, recumbent forms only a few inches above each other. Clothing and equipment were festooned over the ends of bunks. In the black confines of that dungeon, its stuffiness only slightly alleviated by an occasional gust of air from the ventilators, concerted snoring almost drowned the sound of the engines. Johnny would be a long time ridding his dreams of the memories of the nights in that black hole, with the dread of a torpedo and of drowning, trapped, ever present.

It was a blessed relief to be allowed up on deck in the light of day. There was Jezebel, hooded by her tarpaulin, like a veiled woman of the Orient. Next night, Johnny vowed, rather than go below he would crawl under the 'paulin and sleep in the tonneau. However, he never got around to keeping that resolve. He felt safer when he saw his ship in the midst of a great convoy, ringed twice by protecting circles of destroyers. Perhaps there was no truth in the stories that the German submarines lay on the bottom, engines silent to escape the sound-detectors, and then rose right in the middle of the convoy to fire their deadly "fish."

They were several days out before Johnny noticed the new man, one of a small group of replacements who had come aboard at the last moment. This lad was red-headed, with bold good looks. Johnny decided that he wouldn't be apt to cotton to him particularly. Yet he kept being haunted by a resemblance the fellow bore to somebody he knew well—to just whom he could not say to save him.

Days passed, redeemed from monotony by the novelty of the sea voyage and the omnipresent sense of danger. Setting-up exercises, inspections, instruction by the officers filled the daytime. Evenings, before it was time to descend to the black hole, phonograph records were broadcast over a loud-speaker system or groups gathered around mandolin and guitar players. On Sunday the ship's chaplain preached on the text of those trumpet call words of St. Paul's, "Watch ye. Stand fast in the faith. Quit ye like men. Be strong." Johnny's heart stirred to them. Those were words to carry a man through the heat of any battle.

That redhead's oddly familiar features continued to bother him. Several times he saw

Johnny slipped around behind Jezebel and listened. "Whist, lad!" Terence was saying, "It's the captain's jeep."

him at a distance with Sergeant Murphy—certainly nothing to recommend him. "A man is known by the company he keeps," Johnny reflected.

Then one sunny day on the well deck he saw them closer, standing side by side. By gravy, that was it! The bricktop looked like Murphy. They might have been father and son.

Jumping Judas! Maybe they were!

They didn't act especially as if they were close relatives. In fact, they acted—and perhaps it *was* acting—self-consciously casual, as if they were practically strangers or mere shipboard acquaintances.

Johnny stared and swore to himself. Now he had it. This was that son of old Murphy's —the Marine corporal—the rat who had sneaked in and put him out of the running with Dorothea.

Then why wasn't he still in the Marines instead of here as a buck private in a field artillery outfit? The answer came to Johnny in a flash. The scorn of a girl had gotten under the skin of the redhead. She'd sent him packing when he told her that he was in no hurry to go to war but planned to stick around and marry her.

"When she gives him the go-by like that, what does he up and do?" Johnny asked himself. "Why, he tells her, 'All right for you, Dorothea,' or something original like that. 'I'll show you whether I'm your big brave Red or not.' Then he goes and joins up with the Army which in this case is 'First to Fight,' as the Marines say (Johnny chuckled to himself), and somehow he manages to get hooked up with replacements sent to an outfit going overseas. His old man tipped him off about us. And here he is."

But wait. Imagine the gyrenes letting one of their lads transfer to the Army! It couldn't be done. Not by anybody who wanted to depart from the Marines short of a complete wreck. Then if he couldn't do it open and above board, he must have—that was it! The bird must have deserted!

"Sergeant T. Murphy," Johnny told himself, "I've got something on you. But plenty, if I want to use it."

Johnny watched the pair move off. He followed.

Damned if they didn't halt beside Jezebel! He slipped around her other side and shamelessly strained to hear their low-voiced conversation.

"Whist, lad," Terence was saying. "Here's the captain's jeep. Do ye know the name her driver wance gave her? 'Tis a name ye know. Dorothea!"

That clinched it. The Murphys walked on by.

Pfc. Johansen, glaring at the flaming thatch of the younger, growled like old King Ahab, spouse of Jezebel, to his bitter foe, Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

CHAPTER IV

JEZEBEL IS JETSAM

ON LAND it is not possible to avoid steadily a man in your own battery. In cramped quarters on a transport, more or less frequent meetings are inevitable. Johnny and Red Murphy kept bumping into each other in companionways and on stairways They would regard each other with frank antipathy and shove past. Bulked out by their padded kapok life jackets, it took quite a shove. They resembled a belligerent Tweededum and Tweedledee.

Evidently Sergeant Murphy had told his son about his ruckus with Pfc. Johansen. Johnny was sure he could see in the other's eyes a burning desire to clean up on the fellow who had picked on Murphy, Senior.

"But that might spill the beans, mightn't it?" Johnny reflected. "If this bird tries to fight his old man's battles, somebody else will notice their resemblance. Then there'll be some powerful explaining to do. 'Thought that son of yours you're always talking about was in the Marines,' they'll say, 'and here's your spitting image in the field artillery.' Old Murphy will try to pass him off as a nephew or something, I'll bet, but he won't get away with it."

The same idea seemed to have struck the Murphys. They took no chances. They were seldom seen together. But though they would risk no overt act, old Terence was no man to rest idle when he had a grudge to even up and an offspring to promote.

Johnny was sitting in Jezebel's shade up on the deck one afternoon wondering what Dorothea had made out of it all. She'd written him and bawled Red out for being in no hurry to go off to war but wanting to stay home and marry her first. Perhaps she'd told him that all was over between them. Then Red would have fired back an all-right-for-you and a maybe-you'll-be-sorry-some-day line and made a dramatic exit. The next thing Dorothea knew the Marines were around looking for one Red Murphy, deserter. That must have fixed him with her unless he'd written her he was off to war after all. And he wouldn't dare do that since his whereabouts might be spotted. So there was Dorothea left cold on two counts, and she was a girl who liked company.

Served her right. What did he, Johnny, care? He patted the jeep under the 'paulin. He had his Jezebel to remind him of the faithlessness of womankind. He could always count on Jezzy.

But could he?

Heels clicked on the deck close to him. He heard a loathed voice.

"Sir, Sergeant Murphy would like to speak to the battery commander."

"Sure. What is it, Sergeant?" That was Captain Sands answering.

"I've been thinking, sir, that when we get ashore the captain will be nading some expert driving. 'Tis not altogether satisfied I am with Johansen—disregarding that trouble betwane us. Now I'd like to detail wan iv the new men we got to drive the captain's jeep. He has recommendations as a first-class driver, and I know by talking to him that he's a fine mechanic."

Johnny fizzed internally. The old devil! He was trying to swipe Jezebel! They'd name her Dorothea again, those two harps—the low-down, ornery, back-biting rats!

Johnny half scrambled to his feet, then subsided, for Captain Sands was saying, "No, Sergeant. Johansen's a good driver. I grant you there's a lot he doesn't know as a mechanic, but he's learning. What he doesn't know, I'm expecting you to teach him. Understand?"

"Yes, sir. 'Twas only the captain's good I was thinking iv."

The speakers moved off. Johnny emerged chortling. He gave Jezebel such a whack of triumph he hurt his hand.

On the deck below, booklets were being distributed. Johnny hurried to get one. *A Pocket Guide to North Africa* was the title. North Africa! So that's where they were bound! There'd be something doing there all right, with the British pushing the Germans and Italians west from Egypt through Libya and now the Americans coming in as the other side of the vise. Johnny knit his brow. We'll probably be landing in French Morocco and Algeria, he figured, and how will the French like that? It certainly wouldn't sit too well with the Vichy lads, and there must be a lot of them. This mighty armada and the landing orders they were being given meant that they were set for trouble.

But would they arrive at all? The German subs must be wise to this, though they'd given no trouble so far. Johnny didn't like the idea of a swim in the ice-blue ocean and the all-too-likely chance of sinking at last to lie in Davy Jones' locker beside a rusting Jezebel.

Yet it looked as if they would make it. Land had been sighted. In the dark hours before dawn, they stood to on deck, bulked out in life jackets, armed to the teeth, weighted down. If a boat sank, men would have to shed a lot of equipment in a hurry or be dragged right down to the bottom.

Lights twinkled along the shore. The French were apparently still unsuspecting. Johnny wondered again whether they would fight or come over to our side and told himself, "We'll never know till we try."

The big transport was pushing into shore as close as possible. As she slowed to anchor, word was passed along tense ranks. With clicks and creaks, boats were lowered. Dark figures swarmed down rope ladders and into the boats. They were shoved off. The beat and drip of oars receded in the darkness. The landing was under way. Once a bridgehead was secured, the transports would steam on into the docks and unload the guns and vehicles.

OFF to the west toward Oran, heavy gunfire thundered. French forts and battleships must be wreaking havoc with landing attempts there. From the shore opposite the transport, rifle fire spurted crim-

son here and there, but thus far there was no strenuous opposition. Either the French on this part of the coast were friends or they were waiting to blast American landing parties with artillery.

And still none of the boats returned for the men left on the transport. Johnny grew desperately impatient. Was he going to miss everything and have to wait to be prosaicly ferried ashore after all the excitement was over? Wasn't there any way to get in? A flash of inspiration struck him. Certainly there was a way to get ashore. Jezebel!

"Come on, you fellows," he called to four or five shadowy figures near him. "Help me wrap up this jeep. We'll float her in."

They whipped the tarpaulin off Jezzy. Heaving her up, they slipped it under her and made it fast to her sides by its ropes.

"Now," Johnny cried, "hook her on to the boat-davit cables. Lower away!"

Jezzy descended majestically. Down into the water she settled. There, buoyed up by the canvas tarpaulin beneath and around her, she floated like any shipshape little barge, just as she had in maneuvers when they had tried the stunt out in a river.

Her driver ordered, "Get paddles from the raft there. Down the ladder and in her."

Carefully four of them slid into Jezebel's seats. While a man in the rear steered, Johnny and the others paddled frantically for shore. They were close in when they grounded on a sand bar.

"O. K.," said Johnny. "Cut loose that 'paulin."

He slipped into the driver's seat, switched on Jezzy's ignition and stepped on her starter. She purred and throbbed happily. He shifted her into four-wheel drive and auxiliary transmission.

"Hold on to your hats," he shouted. "Here we go."

Jezebel leaped from the sand bar and into deeper water. Her tonneau was almost awash and her engine half submerged, but still she snorted and plunged forward. Her tires took hold of the hard sand of the bottom, and she dashed up on the beach, the softer sand whirling about her in clouds. She sped ahead, plainly eager for action.

Who shall say whether Jezebel was the first American jeep to set tire on the shores of North Africa? Anyway Johnny would always claim that honor for her. She may have been preceded by some Lease-Lend jeeps, but they don't count. Almost certainly she was the first jeep to be floated ashore. It was altogether a superior arrival, surpassing even being flown in by a transport plane.

Now dawn was breaking. At a crossroads loomed a familiar figure — Captain Sands. Johnny braked to a stop. Before he could move, a man in the rear of the jeep swung

Captain Sands

out, ran up to the captain and saluted him.

"Sir," Johnny heard a familiar voice announce, "Sergeant Murphy reports with the captain's jeep."

Of all the triple-tongued, shameless, confounded nerve!

"Good going!" the captain complimented. "I sure do need this bus for a reconnaissance. Where's my driver?"

"Here, sir," Johnny said. "I—"

"All right." Sands swung in beside him. "Up that road. Fast!"

Jezebel sprang forward. The French, it could not be denied, built good roads. She whirled over them with satisfaction. Up ahead at a crossroads stood a French soldier, right arm upraised. He had a rifle but it was slung. Nevertheless Captain Sands covered him with his pistol, as Johnny braked Jezzy to a stop beside him.

"Non, non! Ami," expostulated the Frenchman and emitted a further spate of words in his native tongue, accompanying them with excited gestures.

The captain and Johnny stared blankly at him. Whatever the fellow might be saying was beyond them. Then came a voice from the back seat. It was Red, the ex-marine and he was saying, "I can translate, sir."

While Johnny was bitterly reflecting, "So I brought along that guy unbeknownst as well as that old goat of a pa of his," Red filtered the torrent of French.

The gesticulating Frenchman, it appeared, was declaring that he and his outfit were not fighting but welcoming their gallant deliverers from America. He wanted to take them to his commanding officer down the road to

the left. The Americans must not take the road to the right which led to the camp of a French artillery regiment which had been planning to open fire on the American landing but had been unable to get into position because some true Frenchmen (the speaker drew himself up proudly) had sabotaged their trucks.

"Tell him that was good work," said Captain Sands, "We'll—

He was interrupted by the arrival of an advance guard of American infantry, and hard on their heels a full colonel, no less.

"Transportation, as I live and breath!" the colonel boomed. "How'd you get that jeep ashore so soon? Captain—"

"Glad to take you anywhere, sir," Sands anticipated. "I was reconnoitering for a position when I get my guns ashore. It's the artillery's job to support the infantry, and the jeep's at your service."

"Now we're going to move up and really see some fun," Johnny thought.

"Colonel," Sands was continuing, "I'll take you and a couple of your riflemen. Like to have my motor sergeant along and Private Smith there (so that was the name young Murphy went by, Johnny sniffed) who understands French very well and might come in handy. Johansen, get out and walk back and rejoin the outfit. All aboard, sir."

Captain Sands shifted over and took the wheel. The colonel and his men climbed in. Jezebel snorted and started. She backfired in protest at leaving her master, but there was no help for it.

Johnny, grinding his teeth, watched her go. Then he began trudging back to the shore. His enterprising advance into North Africa had ended in an inglorious retreat.

CHAPTER V

JEZEBEL THE JUGGERNAUT

JOHNNY suddenly awoke to the fact that he was unarmed. His rifle was in the boot fastened to Jezzy's side. The captain had made off in such a hurry that he had not remembered he was leaving his driver defenseless, plumb in the midst of a hostile countryside.

Any lingering doubt that the vicinity was hostile now began to be dissipated rapidly. A tremendous banging resounded from the direction of Oran where landing parties aboard three Coast Guard cutters were attempting to run into the harbor and were being disastrously blasted by the French navy and forts. Furthermore there were hostilities nearer at hand and they gave evidence of becoming distinctly personal. Rifle and machine-gun fire broke out on Johnny's left.

Hastily he turned off the road and began running back toward the beach. A line of a song ran maddeningly through his head again and again: "Johnny, get your gun, get your gun, get your gun."

Try and get it! The trusty Garand was miles away with Jezebel by now, handy for one of those Murphy micks but lost beyond recovery to its rightful owner. Breath gone, Johnny slowed to a walk.

Over a hedge at the edge of a field appeared a dozen rifle muzzles, behind them bearded faces topped by round helmets.

"Halte là!" came a shout.

Frenchless though he was, Johnny got the idea and halted with drill field precision. He correctly interpreted the next Gallic gush as meaning "Put up your hands" and he complied promptly. They crowded around him talking a mile a minute, apparently asking questions. Johnny managed a gesture he had seen described in novels as "an eloquent shrug of the shoulders." The French soldiers, baffled, closed around him and herded him back in the direction he had come.

The firing was louder and livelier. The French patrol, evidently wanting no part of it and eager to rejoin its main body, kept under cover and rushed their American prisoner along. Soon Johnny's tongue was hanging out. He was soft from the inaction of the voyage. Mercilessly his captors pushed him on. By desperate efforts Johnny kept a few inches ahead of the points of a couple of long, thin, murderous bayonets menacing his posterior.

It seemed to Johnny they had traveled miles when the pace was slowed a little. The patrol skirted the racket of heavy firing to one flank and swung into a lane which sloped down a long grade through a cut shaded by trees whose branches made a canopy above it. Back of Johnny, the patrol leader jabbered at him. Though his prisoner could not understand, the French sergeant was observing that they would soon be back with their outfit where someone who spoke English would question him and he'd answer—or else. Johnny could only gather that something unpleasant was probably in store for him.

The squad was massed behind him, and their rifles were undoubtedly loaded. To cut and run for it would be simply making a sieve of himself.

But rescue was on the way, rescue in the best movie tradition. It would not be the U. S. Cavalry galloping up in the nick of time; there was no horse cavalry in this war. Neither would it be the U. S. Marines landing to save Pfc. Johansen and arrest Red Murphy as a deserter in one swoop; the Marines were too busy thousands of miles away in the South Pacific. Nay, it was a friend, single-handed, who approached with such speed and stealth that the French were caught utterly unaware.

"Yippee!" shouted Johnny, grasping his Garand with his right hand and driving with his left.

Johnny heard a crash, assorted thuds, shrieks and yells. He leaped to one side while Frenchmen hurtled through the air or skidded and slithered on their faces over the road on both sides of him. A familiar O. D. shape glided past him. Jezebel, driverless, had taken the enemy in the rear and smitten them hip and thigh and every which way.

With a whoop Johnny took off after his still rolling rescuer. He caught her, swung over her back. Scrambling into the driver's seat, he grasped her wheel and switched on her ignition. He shifted her into gear and let out his clutch. She sparked and throbbed joyously like a maiden in her lover's embrace. They waltzed away from there.

"Yippee!" shouted Johnny, crazily exhilarated. He reached over, jerked the Garand from its boot and snapped a round into the chamber. He grasped the rifle with his right hand and drove with his left.

A spirited fusilade was popping over toward a crest. Johnny put Jezzy at a wooden fence, crashed through it and, shifting into four-wheel drive, stepped on the gas.

"Jezebel," he shouted, "as Napoleon said, 'March to the sound of the guns!'" It was only then that he began to wonder how it had been possible for Jezebel to stage her thrilling rescue. It must have happened this way. The colonel, Captain Sands, and the rest had run into action. Everybody had piled out of Jezebel. They must have left her at the top of that grade without setting her hand brake tightly enough and surely without having left her in reverse gear or blocking her front wheels with stones. Motor Sergeant Murphy ought to have attended to that but he had fallen down on the job.

Johnny could not thrust aside the wild notion that Jezebel, facing down the grade, had realized that he needed her sorely. Slowly she had begun to roll, gathering momentum until she was speeding along at a grand clip. Then she had cracked Vichy France in the seat of the pants, and it was all over but the shouting. Good old Jezzy!

Johnny braked her down in a thicket, turned her around and left the motor going for a quick getaway. He got out with his rifle and cautiously scouted up until he could peer through the grape vines of a vineyard at the top of a crest. Before him the ground sloped down and up to another crest on which a company or two of entrenched Frenchmen, their backs to him, were pouring down a hot fire on attacking Americans.

Grinning, Johnny slipped two clips out of his cartridge belt. Then he swept the French trench with twenty-four rounds of rapid fire. Whether he hit anyone or not he never knew. Dismayed Frenchmen, taken in the rear, popped out of the trench and scattered, running toward his right and left. He heard a cheer as the assaulting American wave swept forward.

He stood not on the order of his going. A vault into Jezebel and he was off. Covered by her cloud of dust, none of the French bullets whizzing after them hit. Johnny cut back into the road and called on Jezebel for everything she had. Her horn stridently demanded right of way, and American infantry coming up on the double granted it prudently.

Johnny stopped only when he recognized a tall figure striding back toward the beachhead.

"Sir," he said, saluting. "Private Johansen reports with the captain's car."

Sands answered his broad grin. "Where in hell—" he began. "Never mind," he went on. "Back in a hurry. Maybe our guns and trucks are ashore by now. Need 'em bad. Step on it."

"Yes, sir," Johnny answered happily, obeying.

Possibly Captain Sands never heard the shouts of "Hey, wait!" The two Murphys were running across a field, waving their arms. Johnny heard and ignored them with keenest delight.

Jezebel gathered speed. Her horn echoed back mockingly.

CHAPTER VI

THE JILTING OF JEZEBEL

THEY mounted a .30-caliber machine gun square in Jezebel's middle between the front and rear seats. It gave her a rakish, waspish look — made her name seem more suitable than ever, Johnny thought. The original Jezebel had been a female deadlier than the male by virtue of a pair of bright eyes, a seductive manner, and a will of her own. By stirring up Ahab to wickedness in the sight of the Lord, she had persuaded him to mow down prophets by the hundred—by indirect fire as it were. In her day she was as good as a machine gun.

Jezebel the Jeep was tough to begin with, and now she had a machine gun in addition to the rifle in the boot at one side and entrenching tools (which can be wielded with deadly effect) clamped on the other. And was she not, alone and unaided, a formidable battering ram, able to scatter a French patrol to the four winds? She was.

Captain Sands jokingly mentioned that he would like to cite Jezebel in orders for her feat, but he well knew that humor should always pass down through military channels, never up.

So Sands compromised on citing Pfc. Johansen. "After all, Johansen," he said, "you don't deserve to be credited with anything more than an assist. It was Jezzy that did the trick. But I've got to hand it to you on initiative after she gave you the chance. It was really your fire that cleared that ridge. Well, you may get a bit of ribbon out of this and then again you may not."

"Thanks, sir," responded Johnny, "Whatever befalls—"

"One thing will befall. I can make it befall myself. You did a good job. I'm making you a Tech 5, and as the warrant says, you will be obeyed and respected as such."

"Much obliged, sir," said his driver. Shortly Johnny was wearing the two chevrons over a T which mark a Technician 5th Grade, addressed as "Corporal." He was addressed as such by all except Motor Sergeant Murphy who pointedly ignored his promotion. When John-

ny grinned at him a trifle gloatingly, the veteran sprang one he had been saving up.

"About that machine gun on your jeep, Johansen," he snapped. "What do you think you're going to be doing about it?"

"Man it when the need arises, Sergeant," Johnny answered blithely.

"Not much you're not. You're the driver. Ye'll nade a machine gunner, and don't let me catch you laving him behind like ye does ithers in the inemy's country. I'm detailing Private Smith."

Johnny gasped. Red Murphy, alias Smith. The old man wishing his brat on him as a regular passenger in Jezebel—spoiling cherished companionship with Captain Sands. But nothing could be done about it. Something like that was always taking the joy out of life, it seemed.

But the fellow did come in handy now and then. Captain Sands sometimes used him as a runner during the remaining days of hard fighting it took to convince the Vichy French that they didn't stand a chance and allow the patriot French to gain the upper hand and swing over to the Allies. Once when the battery was rolling through a village at night, the crimson spurts of snipers' rifles flashed from upper windows and a roof. Lead whistled over Jezebel in the lead. Johnny swung her off into a side street, as the foremost truck ground to a stop, a bullet in the driver's shoulder.

Jezzy's machine gun chattered, spitting a stream of tracers into the windows and sweeping the roof under Red's practiced hand. Obviously the Marines turned out machine gunners able to get the situation well in hand. Riflemen tumbled from the trucks and dashed into the house. Shots and crashing hand grenades sounded then, muffled in the interior. The column rolled on without further interference.

Johnny might have mellowed a little toward Red had he not passed the latter's pup tent in one of their bivouacs and spotted a letter flung down on the blanket roll. The writing looked all too familiar. Johnny could not resist glancing at the postmark. It was an old letter, no mail having reached the American force in North Africa yet. Lo and behold, the postmark showed the same date as the letter he himself had received on the transport the day it had sailed!

That two-timing Dorothea!

THIS land was positively Biblical, Johnny realized now that he had an opportunity to look about him. Tall, bearded, robed Arabs drove their flocks and herds along the road or bestrode tiny donkeys, legs jutting out over crammed panniers so that only the heads, ears, and legs of the tiny beasts were visible beneath rider and load. True, the "A-rabs" and their offspring did not act very Biblical. When they were not begging "shooing gum" and "chawklet" from you, they were trying to steal the shirt off your back and all too often succeeding. The women were draped like those in illustrations from *Tales from the Bible* except that these were Moslem women, mysteriously veiled and with head-covering clutched so close that only one large, lustrous eye appeared. Johnny would risk one glance and look hastily away. With relation to Moslem women, the *Pocket Guide to North Africa* strongly advised: "Never stare at one. Never jostle her in a crowd. Never speak to her in public. Never try to remove the veil. This is most important. Serious injury if not death at the hands of Moslem men may result if these few rules are not followed."

But while the countryside was primitive and pastoral, the towns were so characteristically French that they might have been moved bodily from France. Squares with a bandstand and a monument to the dead of the last war and now and again an older one commemorating the French conquest of this land more than one hundred years ago. Johnny paused before a plaque which declared that here 103 French soldiers in a weak redoubt had repulsed an attack by a multitude of Arabs. Johnny, translating with his dictionary and phrase book, wondered if those Frenchmen had lacked a pocket guide to North Africa and gotten fresh with some Moslem women. He wandered past a church on a summit, confronting the mosques and tombs, white on the crowns of surrounding hills.

The garden of a charming villa beckoned him. Gorgeous red and purple flowers bloomed on its vineclad walls and around a tiled Moorish fountain in a cool, inviting court. To top it off, a very pretty girl sat on the fountain's edge reading. She had blond hair and starry blue eyes and as trim a chassis as a man could ask.

Johnny, staring through the iron-barred garden wall, somehow forgot that he had for-

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sworn all women. Consulting his phrase book, he called, *"Bon jour, mademoiselle."*

The girl looked up. She smiled dazingly. *"Bon jour, m'sieur. Ah, vous êtes soldat américain. Entrez."* She beckoned. Plainly if that was a book of etiquette she had been reading, the question was "Should she ask him in?" and the answer was yes. Johnny obeyed with alacrity and sat down by her side.

"Vous parlez français, m'sieu?" she asked.

"No," Johnny denied, "but I've got a swell little book here that does," and he showed her the phrase book.

"How do you do? *Comment allez-vous?"* read Johnny.

"Je vais bien, merci," the girl answered, and that was one for the book, too. The idea was she felt O. K.

"How is the widow of your uncle?" Johnny began to read next. "Oh, who cares? Got to find a better one than that. Ah, here's the stuff. *'Mademoiselle, vous avez des cheveux blonds et les joues roses. Très belle.'"*

"Oh, m'sieu, comme vous êtes gentil!" she smiled. Whatever all that she'd said might mean, it was plain she liked being told she was a dizzy blonde with rosy cheeks. They bent over the book together, trading phrases back and forth. It was more darn fun. Johnny felt her soft arm against his. The faint fragrance of her perfume enveloped him, and he ecstatically murmured, *"Yum!"*

"Yum? *Qu'est-ce que c'est que* yum?" she asked, not finding it in the book.

Johnny had to piece together an answer for that one.

"Vous," he pointed, *"donner*—that means give, doesn't it?—my nose, er, *mon nez grand* pleasure, er, *plaisir* and how, or as the French put it, *et comment."*

How prettily she blushed, looking up at him with those big blue eyes.

"I'm doing fine," Johnny told himself. "It's time we got to first names."

But he struggled in vain to find some help in the phrase book to put that across. His efforts only made the girl look puzzled.

"Need any help?" a voice called. It was Red Murphy, alias Smith, the heel, and he had vaulted over the garden wall.

"No!" Johnny snapped. "But wait. You can give me a lift on just one question and then get the hell out. Ask her what her name is."

"O. K., Corp. *Mademoiselle, il demand votre nom."*

"Oh," the girl laughed. She turned to Johnny and what she answered hit him like the crack of doom. She said, *"Je m'appelle Dorotea."*

"I might have known," groaned Johnny bitterly. "Won't I ever learn? They're all alike. Even their names sometimes."

He jumped up and strode toward the gate while the girl watched, bewildered.

"Dorothea!" he snorted. "Take her away, Murphy, she's all yours."

He went back to the bivouac and comforted himself by greasing, oiling and washing Jezebel.

(To be concluded)

"Need any help?" a voice called. It was Red Murphy, alias Red Smith, the heel.

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JONATHAN'S

FALCON

By LESTER DENT

ILLUSTRATED BY
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THEY chased Jonathan, the yeoman-falconer, into the bow of the galleon. Jonathan fought them like a wildcat. You could run the length of the galleon using the dropped men whose heads Jonathan cracked as stepping-stones.

"I am the leader you should have!" Jonathan gasped. "But if you insist on following my slick-tongued brother, I'll make him almighty ashamed of you!"

Jude, who was Jonathan's brother, laughed at that. Jude stood on the high sterncastle. Jude's linen wasn't getting torn and his fists weren't getting skinned, not Jude's.

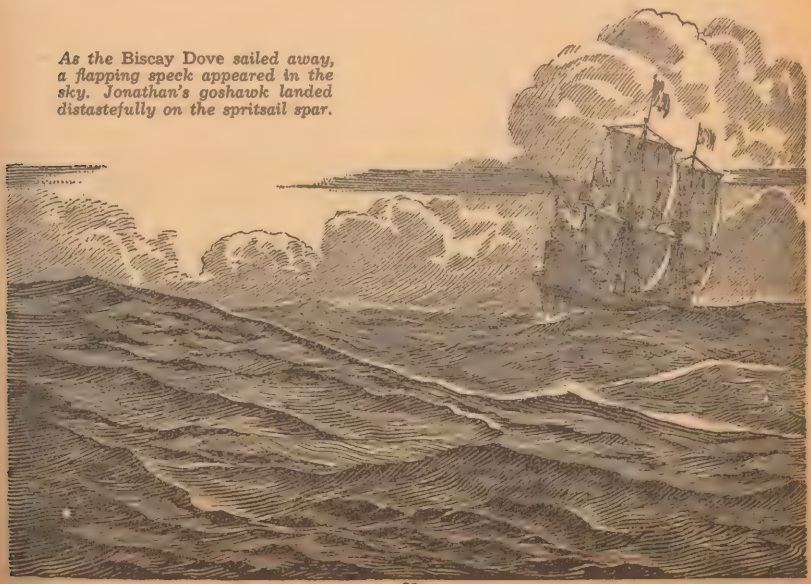
Jude leaned his elbows delicately on the sterncastle rail. He was tall and dark, very handsome with his hawk-like face. His vibrant, melodious voice carried the whole galleon, as he gave them a speech.

"My brother is much like our father," Jude said, with his smooth oratory. "Our mother always said that as long as our father kept at falconing, he was fit for naught but hell-raising, wenching and chasing big ideas. Thus my brother Jonathan. But the day he tosses his hawk loose to become a haggard again, our mother says he will have sense. From that day, his ideas will fit his pantaloons. So with our father, and his father, too."

My brother never misses a chance for a speech, thought Jonathan. He belted a skinny Welshman with his oar.

The goshawk — Jonathan's goshawk — had flown up to the mizzen lateen yard. The goshawk perched high up there and screeched. She had partially dislodged her ornate Dutch hood, so she could see what went on.

"Stoop! Stoop, you silly bird!" Jonathan



As the Biscay Dove *sailed away, a flapping speck appeared in the sky. Jonathan's goshawk landed distastefully on the spritsail spar.*

yelled. "Sink those talons in one of these rascals! Stoop my gaggle-tongued brother! Give me some help!"

The bird ignored him.

One called One-Lip, a squat, overfat Teuton with cheeks like spoiling apples, broke an oar over a carronade. This gave the oar a jagged, devilish end. One-Lip charged, using the splintered oar-end like a pike. But Jonathan skipped clear.

Jonathan walloped One-Lip's skull with his own oar. But Jonathan's oar was fairly splintered by now from whacking heads, so all the blow did was make One-Lip bawl out and drop his own weapon. Jonathan gave One-Lip a hard poke in his pillow-shaped belly.

One-Lip gagged and wobbled away. He snatched up a musketoon, but hesitated and glanced fearfully at Jude. One-Lip wanted more than anything to shoot Jonathan, but he was afraid of Jude. Jude had ordered no gunplay.

In the end One-Lip pointed the musketoon at the goshawk on the lateen yard.

When Jude saw, he instantly lifted his fine flintlock rifle.

"Hold!" Jude roared. "Not even the bird!"

"We must break your scamp brother's spirit!" One-Lip snarled. "Killing his bird will do it. He prizes that falcon above anything."

"No."

"But you just said—"

"No!" said Jude, slapping his flintlock impressively. "On that great day, our mother says, Jonathan must toss aside his falcon willfully. It must be his choice—a pick between two things—I think our mother meant."

One-Lip threw the musketoon on the deck and cursed.

"Speeches!" Jonathan bellowed. "My brother will gaggle you all to a hangman's noose, you fools!"

WHILE he was saying this, someone threw a small cannonball and it hit his chest. It knocked him over the bow. He got hold of the spritsail yard, where he dangled. But he still had what was left of his oar, for a wonder, and he brandished it.

"Cut the spritsail free!" screamed One-Lip, fresh of courage now that Jonathan was in a bad way. "Drop the trouble-maker into the sea!"

They wielded cutlasses on the lines. The spritsail yard, together with the spritsail and some line and Jonathan, fell into the sea. The galleon ran over them all.

Jonathan was a fair swimmer, even if he didn't like it, but he got horribly full of brine. The rough hull planks pummeled him, and the barnacles, as bad as broken glass, did him more damage than the whole fight.

After he came up behind the stern, spouting like a whale, the first thing he saw was brother Jude, grinning down at him from the stern-castle.

"That should cool you!" called Jude.

Jonathan was too busy spouting to talk. He saw he was bleeding somewhat. He wished he had his cutlass. He wished he hadn't stuck the point of the cutlass in the deck with such a flourish, and left it there. He'd done that when the fight began. Now he had no cutlass, and there were plenty of the big man-eating fish called sharks in the Caribbean sea.

The spritsail yard, together with spritsail and lines, bobbed to the surface. Jonathan scrambled aboard. It would support him, but it was a poor raft.

Jonathan beat his own chest with a fist, looking at Jude.

"I still feel like the captain!" shouted Jonathan. "I'm still going to be leader."

Jude's grin got bigger. "Cool off, brother! Cool yourself!"

Jonathan shook his head. "You have not the dash and devil in you to be a pirate, Jude. Not even a plain pirate. Much less a leader." Jonathan pounded his chest again. "Look at me! You can see I'm the man, can't you?"

The stiff breeze was taking the galleon away fast.

"Looking at you, I think I see much worse than our father, in his hell-lifting days," called Jude.

Jude said some more. It sounded like another oration, but Jonathan didn't get much of it because the galleon was lumbering off across the fabulously blue sea. Jonathan didn't even pay much attention.

"She's slow," he grumbled, frowning at the galleon. "She's a fat duck."

He had thought the galleon was too slow before they mutinied and took her. He'd thought so in England, when he and Jude were laying the plans. Jonathan favored something lean and fast, better one of those trim, newfangled fore-and-aft rigs they called schooners. But the *Biscay Dove* was tall and showy, as fancy as King James II's hunting hat, so they chose her, going aboard as crew, innocent as anything.

Jude talked everybody into taking the *Biscay Dove* for their meat, after he and Jonathan had a fight over it.

Jude, tear his pantaloons, had a fearfully sweet way of using words to put himself in a righteous light. If he talked first, and then you hit him, everyone in hearing would think you a sooty villain. Or if you broke his head first, then afterward his sweet words would flow as honey, and the bystanders would pounce on you, like as not.

They took the *Biscay Dove* easily enough, a week ago. There were no women passengers, fortunately. The captain and some others were battened in the hold. Everybody else had de-

cided to be a pirate, one of the Brotherhood. Jude's honey tongue again.

The *Biscay Dove* had many cannon, but most were big fat carronades, fit for no more than firelock range, which worried Jonathan. It didn't seem to bother anyone else. Oh, the *Biscay Dove* was a fine castle afloat, nearly as luxurious as a Spainland Mainer. And so Jude was as happy as a falconer whose bird had just made first stoop at the Duke's hawking.

The trouble was, the vessel was too much like the Spanish gold-haulers they were hoping to loot.

"One does not use a duck to go falconing for ducks," Jonathan complained.

Actually, though, the trouble between himself and Jude was something other. It was a thing that came of their unlike natures, maybe also because they were brothers.

Jude looked to be the older brother. Actually he was the younger, which was probably why he took such zeal in besting Jonathan. A younger brother, plus a little ambition and devilment, adds up to such a feeling, Jonathan had noticed.

They had backed the yards on the galleon, and wallowed her around on the return tack. She came riding the waves, tall as a palace, an impressive white bone of foam in her teeth.

"What ho!" shouted Jude. "Have you cooled enough, you old fool?"

"Old fool! Old!" Jonathan yelled. "I'm twenty-eight summers only, you unfeathered brancher!"

"Do you sail with me as cabin mop? What about it?" Jude called.

"Cabin mop! Is that what I am now?" replied Jonathan angrily.

"It is what you will be if you sail with me," said Jude. "And make no mistake."

"I'll walk. The devil with you!" said Jonathan.

Jude laughed. "You need another ducking, brother!"

Jude grabbed the steering haul, and kicking the steersman on the behind, veered the galleon so that it ran over Jonathan again. Jonathan dived, wary of the scraping barnacles. He bobbed up, and the spritsail litter surfaced again too, and he paddled to it and sat on it.

"What ho, now?" Jude hailed. "A change of mind?"

"No."

"I'll sail away and leave you for good!" Jude warned.

"The devil with you, I said!" Jonathan roared.

THE galleon left him. Jonathan pulled his feet, in their hogskin boots, out of the water and watched the vessel go. She was almost hull-down when there was a flapping speck in the sky, which turned out to be Jonathan's falcon.

The goshawk settled on the spritsail spar distastefully, with her Dutch helmet still askew.

"You are a fool!" Jonathan said, but he was much pleased. He petted the bird, then replaced the hood. With the hood on, the goshawk was better satisfied, for hunting falcons live most of their lives blindfolded.

The *Biscay Dove* had only her topsails sticking above the horizon when a smothering black cloud came out of the western sky and enveloped her.

Soon the cloud reached Jonathan, too. Lightning crawled above the heavens, whizzing and cracking. Wind whistled and the tops jumped off the waves like white rabbits. It rained fit to drown a fish.

When it all cleared, there was no *Biscay Dove*. Jonathan and the goshawk were alone on the sea. And they remained alone for the next five days.

On the fifth day, the man and the goshawk were still on the raft. Of the pair, probably the man had less breath of life left in him.

The sun had proved the worst enemy. Jonathan was poorly protected by his shirt and pantaloons of coarse linen and the hogskin boots. Today, as yesterday, he tried to eat the boots, but they were not palatable. The goshawk wouldn't eat them either.

It was a godsend when, shortly after noonday, a bird appeared in the Caribbean sky.

"A flying bird!" Jonathan croaked rather unbelievingly. He lay on the raft with not a movement, as his experience at hawking had taught him. "A sort of a heron," he decided.

Never taking his eyes off the approaching heron, Jonathan lowered a hand and palmed up some of the Carib sea, which he poured into his mouth. The saltwater struck like needles into his cracked lips, but it lubricated his tongue, so that when he spat out and spoke, his voice was less of a croak. He needed a soothing voice with which to give Moloch a stimulating talk.

Moloch was the goshawk's name.

"Wake up, you red rogue!" Jonathan pleaded.

Moloch bristled her gorge feathers slightly. The Dutch hood, which Jonathan preferred to the less bizarre Indian hood, gave Moloch the aspect of a buzzard. Moloch sat on a flat spot on the raft, because falcons are rock-dwellers by nature and prefer to perch on a flat surface.

"If you want your neck wrung, just jingle your bell and frighten that heron," Jonathan warned softly.

The heron was flying lazily toward the raft, probably curious.

"If you were yourself, Moloch, I would slip you at that heron now," Jonathan continued in a gentle voice. "At the great hawking held by James, Duke of York, now good King James II, God rest him and his taxes, I slipped you at a rook three quarters of a mile away. Remember? What a stoop you made on that rook! Ho, ho! How the earls and their ladies applauded!"

The heron was close enough. Jonathan doffed the falcon's hood, slipped the leash, holding the bird only by the jess straps.

"A hundred yards, Moloch," he said. "Even a baby, even a nestling eyess, could make a stoop at such short range."

Moloch was blinking.

"There, you idiot! See our feast yonder!" said Jonathan sharply.

Then he made the cast, flinging the hawk high. Moloch had seen the heron. She arose, driving herself upward with strokes of her powerful wings. The heron had seen the hawk, too. And Moloch was overly eager, so she didn't get high enough, but came in a short slanting stoop. The frantic, twisting heron was safe by a good two hand-spans.

"Nice going, heron!" yelled Jonathan bitterly. "A fool should have the fact called to his attention. You did it nicely for Moloch."

Moloch recovered poorly from the miss, like a ball of feathers, for she was weak. Then she beat herself upward again, her powerful wings whistling.

"High! High, you dumb brancher!" Jonathan shouted encouragingly. "Ah, that's the way! Get high! Well done, boy!"

Jonathan was on his feet, shrieking like an oaf at a bull-baiting. The rickety raft turned under him, and he was too busy getting his balance to see Moloch make the stoop. But it must have been fast as lightning, because there was a cloud of feathers when Jonathan did look.

"Bring the heron here, you rascal!" roared Jonathan delightedly.

True falcons kill their prey in flight by a violent blow of a partly closed foot. But Moloch was a goshawk, so her method was to drive her great pounces into the vitals of the prey and hang on until it was dead.

"A handsome boy," said Jonathan, taking the heron and petting the falcon.

Moloch, after the curious habit of goshawks, wrapped her outstretched wings and tail about the quarry until its feeble struggles ceased completely.

"Fine boy!" said Jonathan. He always talked to Moloch as if she were a male.

They ate. Jonathan divided fairly enough with Moloch.

His stomach filled, for a pleasant change, Jonathan sat back sleepily and chuckled. "Alas, so our mother said that as long as I was a falconer, I would be fit for naught but hell-raising, wenching and chasing big ideas."

He laughed heartily. "For me, there will be no day of any other choice," he said. "Never, never!"

He slept.

Sometime during the night, the sea placed the raft gently on an island beach.

A SMALL sound from Moloch, an urgent one, awakened Jonathan. He was on a shore, he realized, and some stranger was pointing a long firelock at Moloch. He was doped with sleep on a full belly, but he saw that much.

"No, no, you lout!" yelled Jonathan.

He bolted up. He grabbed the firelock. He wrestled. He got the gun. By that time the sleep was flapped out of his brain, and he saw he had seized a wench.

"Mistress, I did not know you were a girl!" he exclaimed.

The wench, who has been spilled on the

sand, got to her feet. She was small, like a bird, and angry. She was not dressed as a girl should be; she wore a shirt and pantaloons of linen. She kicked Jonathan's shin.

"Ouch! Ah, vixen!" shouted Jonathan. "You were going to shoot my falcon, so I grabbed you!"

"You lump! I was only poking the silly thing to learn what it was," said the girl.

Jonathan examined her. His rage, what there was, left him like water from a split keg. She was a pretty one!

"I would not have laid a hand on you, mistress, had I seen you were a girl," he said.

"I doubt it," she said.

Jonathan grinned and tossed her the firelock. "Here, doubting baggage, take your piece!"

She caught the weapon smoothly enough and immediately held it so that he was looking into its muzzle. "You're an unpredictable rascal," she said, definitely more friendly than before.

"And you are lovely," said Jonathan boldly.

A smile tickled the corners of her mouth. She lifted her voice. "Father, he does not seem bloodthirsty," she called. "I suppose you won't need to shoot him."

"That's better!" cried a pleasant voice, which proved to belong to a stout, middle-aged man, very leathery of face.

This happy fellow had been lying on the backslope of a nearby sand-dune. And it gave Jonathan a shock to realize that the old man had had a large fowling firelock poked over the dune crest the whole time.

"Is that the way you welcome shipwrecked sailors?" asked Jonathan, an eye on the big fowling piece.

"You did not like your welcome?"

Jonathan bowed low to the girl. "It was a marvelous welcome, mistress. With angels and everything."

The smile tickled her mouth ends. "We are the Gates." She touched her breast. "I am Anne." She pointed at the old man. "This is Cotton, my father."

"I am Jonathan," said Jonathan.

"Shipwrecked?"

"Aye, in a way."

Anne said, "You have a hungry look, Jonathan."

"My stomach must have put its head out betwixt my ribs and whispered it to you," said Jonathan.

Cotton Gates said, "We'll victual you, boy."

They hadn't walked far before Jonathan saw a settlement ahead. The houses were good to see. But it was better, Jonathan already was thinking, to watch Anne's ankles as she walked along with the bells of her linen pantaloons rolled up to her knees.

Anne glanced often at Moloch, who rode Jonathan's hard leather skullcap. She's never seen a falcon before, Jonathan concluded. Imagine that!

Jonathan indicated the town. "What place is that?"

"A town of several names, one of which is Nassau. This is New Providence Island," said the girl.

"Never heard of it," said Jonathan. "How far to Tortuga?"

Tortuga! The word was a cannon report. It was a stink.

"Tortuga!" gasped Anne. "You are from Tortuga?"

The old man, Cotton, suddenly pointed his firelock at Jonathan. He backed away, nervously. The girl Anne put a hand over her mouth and nostrils, as she would had she come on a very bad drift-fish on the beach.

"Nay, I'm not from Tortuga—yet!" shouted Jonathan. "What's wrong with Tortuga? I hear it's a place to make your fortune."

"Anne, run for home!" said the old man. "As for you, Jonathan or whatever your name, yonder's the town. We want none of you!"

The girl was running away. The old man ran after her. They disappeared in a scrawny jungle.

"You—you puritans!" Jonathan yelled after them. "I've a gabble-tongued brother who'll be found in Tortuga."

DISGRUNTLED, Jonathan sat under a tree. A tree, from the way he'd heard them described, which must be a palm.

"Tortuga," he remarked to Moloch, "seems to have a name which scares maids and old men."

He pried a heel off a hogskin boot. From this hiding-place, he took two pieces of eight, then hammered the heel back. Both heels were chock with gold, which was the good reason he had kept the hogskin boots on.

Later, he walked the blazing streets of the town. The buildings were gay with bright colors and the glistening sunlight made everything brighter.

Jonathan found an inn, the Hawk's Perch. It had a poor job of a carved hawk for a sign. Jonathan snorted at the sign, concluding the woodcarver had never set eyes on any kind of a hawk. He entered.

"Wine. A stoup of it," he ordered. "Then bring all you have to eat."

He was served with some order of shellfish and boiled bullmeat and flat-tasting fruit.

"What know you of Tortuga?" Jonathan asked.

With a squeal like a mare, the serving scullion fled. Then the innkeeper came, casting weasel glances of caution and rubbing his hands together.

"You came to a good friend, fellow," whispered the innkeeper. "What have you to sell?

I pay the best prices. Where lies your vessel?"

"Who do you think I am?" Jonathan asked, surprised.

"Ho, one of the Brotherhood of the Coast, of course." The innkeeper cackled gleefully. "Already I hear you are a shipwrecked mariner. That was cute, a cute story."

"I'm no representative from a shipload of pirates with goods to sell, which I see is what you think," Jonathan said.

The innkeeper withdrew, looking both frightened and disgusted. Later, when Jonathan got his bill, the exorbitant sum made his eyes pop. He sprang up, found the innkeeper, and grabbed the fellow by the stock. "You cut my bill to a decent one-fifth," said Jonathan, "or I'll tell the governor you're dealing with pirates, and not giving His Worship his cut. And I will be your guest a few days, also."

"All right," the innkeeper mumbled.

The next morning Jonathan took a walk to work the stiffness out of his body, and to satisfy a young man's natural curiosity about a new place. He noticed that some people didn't speak or even look at him, while others, usually disreputable, hailed him like a tavern friend. Word was evidently around that he was a pirate.

Disturbed by being shunned, Jonathan went hawking in the country. Soon Moloch made a fine stoop, a whistling, thrilling stoop, on a skillful old seagull. Jonathan roared encouragement and applauded.

"I'll always be a falconer!" Jonathan yelled, then wondered why he'd howled that out like a fool.

He found some milk cattle, and sat watching them. The cows, he felt sure, belonged to the Gates. From the direction taken by Anne and her father when they left Jonathan on the beach, he believed they lived in the neighborhood somewhere. It was a pleasant glade where the cattle grazed, and Jonathan had long, refreshing naps through the day.

The maid Anne appeared to fetch the cattle at evening, which was what Jonathan had been waiting for.

"Don't run," said Jonathan. "You are like a glorious silver moon rising. I knew you'd be, so I waited here all day for the sight."

Anne was startled, but as Jonathan remained seated, she didn't run.

"I wanted you to meet Moloch, my hawk," said Jonathan, stroking the falcon. "His plumage is still in the red, which means he is slightly less than two years old. A fine falcon."

"He's an ugly thing," Anne said.

Jonathan nodded soberly. "It was in my mind that you would say that. They are the same words my mother used. The exact words. And it worries me. Would you like to know why it worries me?"

"I care not what plagues you, Jonathan Whatever-your-name," she said, tossing her chin. "And you leave me alone, understand!"

Jonathan watched her leave with the cows, and just watching gave him such a pleasant disturbance in the mind that he sat where he was until well after dark.

The next day he slipped up behind Anne while she was standing on the beach, wrapped his arms around her and planted a kiss.

"A sample," he said, "of the fine goods I have for you."

"You hound!"

"'Tis the only sample I give away without return, though."

She hooked a foot behind his leg and tripped him sprawling. They were at the edge of the sea, and Jonathan fell amid some bluish bladder-like horrors with long tendrils which the waves had cast up. These stung him. They were Portuguese men-o'-war, stinging like fire. Jonathan bellowed with pain, really bawling louder than need be, when he heard Anne laughing as she ran away.

"Oh ho, she's not really angry, Moloch," he chortled to the falcon. "We're sailing fine."

ANOTHER day, and he was there when she came for the cattle. He remained seated, but held up the falcon. "Today do you still think Moloch is an ugly thing?" he asked gravely.

"Hideous," she said.

"That is what I wanted to talk to you about," said Jonathan. "Will you listen while I tell you about my mother, then about something she says of the men in our family?"

"I'll listen," Anne said, after hesitating.

Jonathan talked about his mother, and his voice grew very gentle. He was homesick, and he showed it when he described the cottage in St. Giles-in-the-Fields, the garden, the flowers, and his mother getting ready for church on Sabbath day. And he talked about Granny Wells, his father's mother, who was strangely like his mother.

"Now here's what is worrying me," continued Jonathan gloomily. "My mother always says that as long as a man keeps at falconing, he's fit for naught but a wild life. Yet if he cast his hawk loose to go free as a haggard, that day he has sense."

"Why do you tell me this?" asked Anne.

"I don't know. Except that when I look at you, it seems to get in my mind. I thought I'd better tell you."

"All right, you have told me."

"But it makes no sense to me!" Jonathan complained. "My mother must be speaking a parable, a riddle, a play of words. I do not understand it. Truth, I've always laughed at it. But why does it bother me when I look at you? Why?"

Anne flew into a surprising rage.

"Dumb!" she cried. "You *are* a fool, aren't you!"

And she ran away.

The galleon, *Biscay Dove*, was a tower of shadow on the harbor when Jonathan got back to town. Jonathan ran to the inn, and Jude was there.

"Brother Jonathan!" Jude said. 'I didn't intend to maroon you on the sea!"

"I knew that, Jude," said Jonathan.

"Jonathan, Jonathan, my brother," said Jude, and tears came to his eyes. "I've been near mad with worry. I only sailed away to give you a scare. And then there was that storm, which was not much of a storm, but gave the ship great trouble—"

"The vessel is nothing but a fine house built on a box," said Jonathan, "as I've told you."

Jude nodded. "Anyway, we could not find you after the wind died. It was awful. I hunted for days, following the currents. And the currents brought me here, thank God!"

"I am fine," said Jonathan. "I got gaunted some, but now I am fine, and so is my falcon."

"Good," said Jude. "Then you can sail with us to Tortuga."

Jonathan frowned. He said nothing.

"But you still sail as cabin mop," added Jude. "I haven't changed my mind about that."

"It takes thinking about," Jonathan said, and stared at his stoup of wine.

"My God!" yelled Jude. "What has hold of you? When I said cabin mop, I expected you to black my eye!"

Jonathan gave no satisfactory answer. He was thoughtful, gravely thoughtful, the rest of the evening.

Soon after the burst of dawn, Jonathan was in the town streets, questioning the people who owned cattle. He talked prices of bullmeat, of cured boucan. He asked the price of cows, of a bit of grazing land, mentally comparing the totals to the sum of the gold in the heels of his hogskin boots.

"What the devil!" shouted Jude, coming upon him. "Are you going into the cow business?"

"It seems profitable," said Jonathan.

"But you are a falconer and a pirate by inclination," Jude said. "Many the time you've said so."

"I'm thinking," muttered Jonathan. "Don't bother me."

Jude warned, "We sail tomorrow. My crew hasn't pirated anything and they have no money to spend, so we're getting no welcome at all. Remember, tomorrow we sail."

"I'll keep it in mind," said Jonathan.

HE went to the glade where the Gates cows grazed. He whistled a signal. Jonathan had not arranged any signal with Anne, but he made his whistling sound so it couldn't be anything but a signal, and Anne Gates came, after a while. She must have delayed, Jonathan was secretly pleased to notice, to make herself more lovely. She wore no shirt and pantaloons today, and she was all girl. She took his breath, in her gay silk frock.

"I must talk with you, Anne," said Jonathan. "It's about my mother's riddle. I must understand it. You must explain it to me."

"There is no riddle," said Anne.

"But I'm troubled," said Jonathan. "I seem to be facing two choices, one of which I must make. My mother's prediction seems to be involved, her saying about me being fit only for devilment as long as I'm a falconer. Now I love you, and I love my falcon—"

Brother Jude bounded from behind a bush. Jude, darkly handsome, was grinning, and there was gay fire in his eyes.

"So it's a maid!" Jude shouted. "Ho, I knew it!"

Half a dozen sailors off the *Biscay Dove*, the Teuton called One-Lip among them, followed Jude from behind the bush.

"Jude, you followed me!" said Jonathan.

"Aye. To find what was changing you."

Jude examined Anne with saucy approval.

"So it's another maid," he added. "Your taste improves, brother."

"There have been other girls!" Anne cried angrily at Jonathan.

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"Certainly," said Jonathan. "But the question is, will there be still more?"

Jude said, "Jonathan, we sail tonight. We've changed our plans. So you'll have to make up your mind."

"I'm glad you came," Jonathan told Jude. "It gives me a chance to fix myself a clear choice."

"Eh?"

"I am going to lick you," Jonathan shouted. "The winner shall be captain of the *Biscay Dove*, if he wishes."

"You have never licked me in your life!" said Jude. "It's a deal!"

Jonathan stripped off his shirt. He threw the shirt in One-Lip's face, followed and whaled One-Lip on the jaw, felling the Teuton senseless. "He likes to climb on a man's back," said Jonathan. "I want none of that."

"Fair enough," said Jude, placing his own fine silk shirt carefully on the ground—and secretly getting two fistfuls of dust which he hoped to toss in Jonathan's eyes. But Jonathan saw that trick. He dodged the dust.

The two brothers jumped around for a while. They tried various kinds of kicking and gouging, each trying to see if the other had forgotten one of the old tricks. Jonathan eventually tore the leg off Jude's fine pantaloons, which griped Jude more than any blow.

"You've got the soul of a hawker!" Jude screamed. "No maid will ever rid you of it!"

"We'll soon see," said Jonathan.

He rushed, because Jude was fingering his torn pantaloon. But Jude had fooled him. Jude wasn't really concerned with the pantaloon. Jonathan got a bang on the head that made his toes ache. He kept coming. Jude's feet got tangled. They were on the ground. Jonathan, in a fight on the ground, was like a man made of ropes. You could hear Jude's joints crack over his howling.

"Give in?" Jonathan asked.

"No!"

"You're licked," said Jonathan.

"I know it," Jude bellowed. "But I don't give in."

Jonathan tossed his brother away. "Licking you was the bargain," he said. "I win."

Jude got to his feet. He put on his shirt. He picked up the leg which had been torn off his pantaloon and clucked sadly over it. "You win. You're the captain," he said. "Hurry up, because we're sailing tonight."

"Don't start giving me orders now!" yelled Jonathan.

Jude adjusted his shirt under his belt, all the while looking at Jonathan sadly. "So," he said. "You're not going."

"That's right, I'm not going," Jonathan agreed. He picked up the falcon, which was roosting peacefully on its block. "Here, take Moloch. He's yours."

"But you love that falcon!" said Jude.

"True. But I don't want temptation around. Take him. You are a mighty poor falconer, so in a few weeks Moloch will go wild as a haggard and leave you. He'll be happy."

Jude took the goshawk. He gestured at his sailors to pick up One-Lip and carry him away. When they were alone, except for Anne, Jude opened his arms to Jonathan and said gently, "Brother, I know you'll be happy raising cattle. I'll put my ship in here to buy bullmeat of you. I'll be your best customer."

There were tears in Jonathan's eyes, too. "It was nice of you, Jude, to let me win."

"Ho, so you knew I faked and let you win!" shouted Jude. "Well, you had a fair choice, anyway. You knew you could be captain. That's what you wanted to know, wasn't it?"

"Yes," Jonathan said.

Judge kept waving good-by as he departed. Jude's heart, you could tell, was full of envy for his brother, who not only stood with an arm around the maid of his choice, but who had also cast his falcon away to become a wild haggard again, as their father had done.

"Brother! Who was the happiest man you ever knew?" Jude yelled before he went over the hill.

"Our father!" shouted Jonathan instantly, with a grin.

When the guns finally jammed themselves in the wreckage, McTurk made his way through the shambles to fasten the upper yards.

Pearls Without Price

By CARL CLAUSEN

THE *Falcon* was a brig of 400 registered tons, square-rigged in both tops with double topsails and royals. Painted white with false black gun-ports she had more than once been mistaken for a man-o'-war and given a wide berth by Cantonese and Malay pirates. She was a fast little hooker. It was a matter of record that she had logged eighteen knots under bare poles running the easting down around Cape Hope.

McTurk and his mate had bid her in in Sidney, Australia, whence she had been taken after having been overhauled by an Australian gunboat and caught with her hold full of blackbirds for the Fijian sugar plantations. It was the year of the great Australian drought. Ships were gathering barnacles in every Australian port, so they had got her for a song. McTurk and his mate, being Americans, had felt it their patriotic duty to bid her in for

she'd been sturdily built in Bath, Maine. Her speed had something to do with their bidding, it must be admitted. They were often engaged in little enterprises that necessitated swift heels.

In the pubs along Sidney's George Street, McTurk had heard of the new pearling grounds in the Gulf of Carpinteria, alee of York peninsula. Some Japs had formed a small settlement there called Normanton, and were cleaning up. The British Colonial Office had already put a stiff license fee on the Jap luggers for working the beds.

McTurk had ideas of his own on the subject of licenses and tariffs which were somewhat at variance with the notions of the British Colonial Office. He considered that the seas belonged to anybody who could sail them, and that the things that swam, scuttled or just sat—like pearl oysters—therein, were the property of him who got there first, a philosophy which had got better men than him into a peck of trouble.

It was early March when the *Falcon*, after clearing the Barrier Reef and having rounded Cape York, bore southward along the west coast of the peninsula. Word had come to McTurk that the cutter *Wallaby* was being careened and having her bottom scraped on the beach at Port Moresby, New Guinea—which, if the report was correct, meant that he'd have things pretty much his own way along Torres Strait and adjacent bays, gulfs and inlets for the time being.

As he paced the poop deck of the brig, squinting at the mangrove jungle to leeward, he smiled at the thought of the little plan he had worked out. When Captain McTurk smiled there was a definite human look about him. You forgot for the moment his slightly tufted, faunlike ears. His gray Caledonian eyes lighted his hard-bitten face, and the scar that ran from his temple to his square jaw crinkled with little wrinkles of mirth. The scar harked back to some years earlier when he had ducked a Malay *kris* in the Sulu archipelago just in time to keep from being deprived of his head.

HE was quite proud of his plan as he looked along the deck of the brig. He had caused four of the false gun-ports on each side to be cut out and in each opening he had mounted an old, heavy brass carronade. He had bought the eight carronades in a junk yard in Sydney whence they had found their way from a dismantled corvette of the vintage of the *Bounty*. It was doubtful if they could have been fired without blowing the gunner to kingdom come, but they looked impressive.

In the waist of the ship the mate was superintending the heaving of the lead-line for soundings as the *Falcon* slipped along on a four-knot breeze. Presently he came up the poop ladder and said, "Water's shallowing fast."

He was a reckless young man of Spanish descent from the San Francisco Bay district. If pressed he would also admit descent from Joaquin Murietta, the California bandit, but he never bragged about it. He had inherited the paternal disregard for other people's property, and he was handsome in a sultry Latin way, and even more unscrupulous than McTurk. He was down on the ship's articles as Jesús Maria Murietta y Lopez, which shows that you never can tell about names. Captain McTurk always addressed him as Mister Murietta in front of the crew.

The skipper picked up his glasses and focused them on the shoreline dead ahead where a small forest of masts and spars was just discernible in the morning mist. He turned to the man at the helm.

"Luff two points and hold her steady," he told the man, then added to the mate, "Pull your lee braces down a bit, Mr. Murietta. I'm standing off a little. There may be reefs along this shore."

The mate nodded.

"Larboard braces!" he sang out to the crew, and departed to superintend the operation.

It was noon when the *Falcon* came to anchor in the middle of the Japanese pearling fleet off Normanton, ran up the Union Jack under her gaff and opened her eight gun-ports.

While McTurk and Mr. Murietta were eating dinner in the messroom, the cabin boy knocked and informed the skipper that a Jap wished to speak with the captain of the ship. The mate winked at the skipper and the skipper winked back.

The Oriental who entered was splendid in a frock coat, bowler, shirt without tie and a large rusty leather briefcase. His English was of the variety known as pidgin interspersed with hisses and deep bows. McTurk managed to translate the result into the following: The Sons of Nippon devoutly hoped that nothing had come up to impair the magnificent, incomparable and altogether delectable relations that had always existed between the Government of the Rising Sun and Her Majesty's Navy.

McTurk, attired in an old uniform heavily weighted with hashmarks and brass buttons which he had located among the stock of a defunct costume company in Sydney, concurred gravely in that hope, and inquired how the pearling beds were panning out, adding that he hoped that the Sons of the Flowery Kingdom were making out well.

The Japanese tried to look sad. The fleet of his unfortunate compatriots were barely making expenses.

McTurk offered condolences. In that event,

he said, he assumed that the Japanese would not care to renew their licenses for the following season?

The Oriental paled an inch under his yellow skin. It wasn't *quite* that bad, he intoned. What was worrying him was that Her Magnificent Majesty's Government might wish to raise the license fee, which would practically drive him and his fleet out of business.

McTurk considered. The situation was delicate. He handed the Jap an old theatrical poster and asked him to read it. The Oriental shrugged and regretfully informed McTurk that he could not read English—which was the information the skipper was after. He looked across at Mr. Murietta and said, "What do you think? We have certain powers of discretion given us. What do you say we reduce these poor people's license fee, Mr. Murietta?"

"'S'all right by me," the mate replied.

McTurk coughed. He turned to the Jap.

"It is not the policy of Her Majesty's Government to reduce fees indiscriminately, but in view of the—er—extenuating circumstances and Her Majesty's coming Jubilee . . ." He paused impressively to see if the Jap was getting the drift without the necessity of actually making a statement or promise that could be construed by an unsympathetic court as getting money under false pretenses or masquerading as a ship of war of the Queen's Navy.

To his immense relief, the Jap *was* getting the drift. He seemed hardly able to believe his ears, but he was smiling from one of them to the other.

"We shall never forget such magnanimity," he hissed huskily.

"Let's see your license papers," McTurk said.

The Oriental dug down into his dusty briefcase and brought forth a document heavily laden with official seals, red ribbons and florid signatures. McTurk smacked his lips. The total sum involved for the pearling fleet was well into four figures sterling.

"I think," he said judicially, "that it could be trimmed a bit, eh, Mr. Murietta?"

The mate brightened. Trimming was his avocation.

"Why not? How about cutting it a third for next season?"

McTurk kicked him under the table.

"One fourth is all I should care to take the responsibility for," he replied severely.

"It was just a notion," the mate muttered darkly.

The expression of the Jap's face was beatific.

"It is most generous of Her Imperial Jubilee Majesty," he murmured.

McTurk leaned forward.

"Can you keep a secret?" he asked the Oriental.

The Oriental replied that nothing on earth, in the water or in the sky could induce him to betray a confidence.

"The glorious Queen will have reigned fifty years next year," McTurk intoned. "We sailors of the Realm have decided to make her a present of a string of pearls the like of which has never been seen before. The Thursday Island luggers have supplied a good many nice pearls, but we need a good many more. We are, of course, willing to pay a decent price for them."

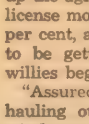
The Jap was charmed with the idea. It saved him an expensive trip to Sydney to haggle with the pearl buyers.

"You shall have the choice of the entire season's catch, Excellency," he replied tremulously.

"Captain," McTurk corrected. "Just a plain sailor like yourself." He arose. "While I draw up the agreement, you go ashore and bring the license money for next season, less twenty-five per cent, and your trays of pearls. I shall have to be getting out of here before the willy-willies begin to blow. It's almost time."

"Assuredly, Captain. We have already begun hauling our luggers ashore before the great wind comes."

"O.K., toots," said McTurk under his breath as Mr. Murietta escorted their visitor on deck.



THE agreement Captain McTurk drew up was a simple bill-of-sale in duplicate for six thousand pounds sterling in pearls, receipt of which herewith acknowledged. He manufactured a gorgeous seal of red sealing wax into which he pressed a five-shilling piece, tails up. Queen Victoria had never looked more impressive. The sealing wax invested her with a definite royal-purplish look.

The Jap appeared to think so, too, when he returned. He signed both copies under McTurk's sprawling signature and the skipper and Mr. Murietta spent the best part of two hours picking out pearls from the Oriental's trays to the exact amount of six thousand pounds sterling.

For good measure the Jap picked up a nice little gem and presented it to McTurk.

"For the Mrs. Captain," he beamed.

McTurk all but blushed at the implication. He had never been known to marry them.

"I hope you're not trying to bribe me?" he said sternly.

The Jap almost collapsed with horror. He hissed protestations all over the cabin, but the skipper handed the gem back to him, under Mr. Murietta's deep scowl.

When the Oriental had departed and had been paid for the pearls with his own license money, the mate said, "Wot the hell did you go and give him back that pearl for? It was worth two hundred pounds if a penny!"

The skipper looked at Mr. Murietta bleakly.

"Rooting hogs never got anything better than truffles, Mr. Murietta. If he had got the idea that we were susceptible to bribes he might have called the deal off. I was taking no chances."

"Just the same I hated to see that six thousand pounds go back in his valise," the mate growled.

McTurk regarded him sternly.

"You will remember, please, Mr. Murietta, that this is a law-abiding English colony—not California. We heave anchor at once for San Francisco."

"So California is not civilized!" the mate howled. "Why you damned narrow-minded Boston codfish—"

"Mr. Murietta," McTurk intoned patiently, "aren't you forgetting yourself? When we entered upon our partnership you agreed that you were to obey my orders on the high seas. . . . Another railroad line has just been finished across the Rockies. San Francisco has doubled in population in the last two years, I'm told. If they can drive golden spikes they can afford to buy pearls."

Captain McTurk was not a literary man. He had never heard the remark made by a brother Caledonian about the best laid schemes of mice and men. When the *Falcon* was beating up the coast of York peninsula for Torres Strait the wind suddenly failed. For two whole days the brig lay becalmed with her sails slatting. McTurk launched a boat and for another two days the crew strained at the oars trying to tow the helpless vessel around Cape York where a breeze might be expected. While they were occupied with this melancholy task under the broiling tropic sun, the cutter *Wallaby* came chugging around the cape with her sails furled and her auxiliary engine kicking her through the molten sea at a scant six knots per hour.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES DYE

The Jap nearly collapsed with righteous horror at McTurk's bald accusation.

McTurk and Mr. Murietta looked at each other. The *Wallaby* carried a bow gun and a stern chaser. She was palpably on her way to Normanton to collect the license fee for the next season, her habitual chore at this time of the year.

Now, in addition to policing the waters about the Antipodes, the *Wallaby* was also a sort of first aid to vessels that might encounter trouble in those treacherous waters. When her commander saw a becalmed brig with slatting sails trying to claw herself off-shore with her long-

boat, he obligingly hove alongside and offered McTurk his hawser.

"I'll pull you clear of the cape, skipper," he sang out. "The tide'll take you through the straits."

McTurk was not a man to look a gift-horse in the teeth so he accepted the offer.

"Mighty nice of you, Lieutenant," he replied. "Stand by to take their line, Mr. Murietta," he told the mate.

"Not at all, Captain, not at all," the lieutenant replied. "Always glad to be of help."

An hour later the *Wallaby* cast off and went about her business. There was still no wind, but the tide carried the Falcon out of danger. For another day she drifted, sails slatting, through Torres Strait. Not a breath of air stirred. The sea was a casket of molten lead and the sky a burnished lid that fitted it snugly. The heat was terrific. Pitch cooked in the deck seams. You could have fried eggs on her iron hawse bits. Sharks circled her hopefully.

Along in the afternoon a dark bank of cloud seemed to rise out of nowhere on the western horizon. McTurk went below and took a look at the glass. He ran his hairy hand over his eyes, then sprinted up the companionway.

"Royal clewlines!" he bawled, running to the halyards. "Mr. Murietta, take the starboard watch to the fore. Port watch lay aft to the main! Step lively!"

The royal yards came down on the run.

"Up and make fast. One man to each top!" McTurk sang out. "T'gallant clews next!"

In twenty minutes the brig was down to lower topsails and fore-staysail. The first fugitive puffs of the typhoon caught the slatting sails, bellied them and the brig fell off before the wind just as the smoke from the returning *Wallaby* showed around the point of Cape York. In a moment the cutter cleared the point. She, too, was shortening sails. Being schooner-rigged, she was down to bare poles in no time at all.

BEING also some miles dead astern of the brig, the typhoon hit her first. She came scudding along at a great rate. When she was within a mile the wind caught up with the *Falcon*, took hold of her topsails with a yank that threw her on her side. She righted and went tearing down the strait.

McTurk luffed to clear Thursday Island and the Barrier Reef which extended far to the northward toward the Papuan coast. The *Wallaby* followed suit.

The sky clamped down on the two vessels with a ceiling of coal-black clouds through which bolts of lightning fluttered, stabbing at their slender spars. The smoke from the *Wallaby's* funnel streamed past McTurk's ears and made him cough as he strained at the helm while his crew went about the Herculean task of gathering in the lower topsails and furling them.

They were saved the trouble. Both sails blew out of the bolt-ropes and the shreds fluttered far and wide like a miniature snowstorm. The wind took hold of the brig's bare yards and settled down to business. Being in ballast, the *Falcon* was riding high. The first real gust of the typhoon almost lifted her clear of the water and smacked her back again. McTurk thought for a moment that her keel had gone through her deck, but she was a stout-built little hooker. As soon as she had gathered speed, she tried to catch up with the typhoon that streamed past McTurk's tufted ears like a cataract going over a brink.

Steam adding to the *Wallaby's* speed, she was catching up. Presently she overhauled the *Falcon* and the two vessels raced side by side through Torres Strait, past Thursday Island, clearing the Barrier Reef by a scant mile.

Old-timers still tell you about that remarkable race: two ships tearing side by side before a ninety-mile gale. McTurk swore afterwards that he logged forty knots. The skipper of the *Wallaby* banked his fires to keep from tearing his propeller off. Still the cutter kept abreast of the *Falcon*. The two ships were running before the wind so fast that they stayed with the typhoon. There was nothing else to do. An attempt to heave to and ride it out would have put them broadside to it and have swamped them in an instant.

McTurk, straining at the helm to keep the *Falcon* from broaching to, peered astern through the murk and tried to estimate his chances of survival. Although it was still a good hour until sundown, the whole universe seemed to have been blotted out in a vast pall of darkness, illuminated brilliantly from time to time by bolts of lightning that tore from horizon to horizon splitting the clouds asunder. In these brief flashes he saw the *Wallaby* and her slender spars traced against the brilliance.

All at once the sky seemed to disintegrate into a vast sheet of water, spilling the contents of a thousand floods upon him. Not rain, but a solid sheet of water that engulfed him, filling his ears and nostrils until he could neither breathe nor hear. He opened his mouth for a gasp of air and was half-drowned in the attempt. Rain mingled with salt water was flung at him in savage gusts. It bounced from the deck over the bulwarks and back into the sea again.

Mountains of water piled up behind the brig, broke all about her until she seemed to be suspended for minutes in a milk-white expanse. Tons of white water poured over her bulwarks. Only her spars and rigging were visible. In the palsied flutter of the lightning, he saw his men clinging to the shrouds of the

crows' nests. The deck had become untenable.

Presently he felt a touch on his shoulder. It was Murietta. The mate yelled something, but his sentences were carried far and wide on the gale. Finally he made the skipper understand that the eight carronades had gone adrift and were tearing about the deck.

Emergencies were not unknown to McTurk. He quite often created them himself, but for once in his life a modicum of doubt assailed his aplomb. He was being chased by a typhoon, a cutter and a flock of brass wildcats.

He turned the helm over to the mate and fought his way down the poop ladder. A scene of utter shambles, devastation and wanton destruction met his eyes in the next flash of lightning.

All the five-hundred-pound brass carronades were charging about the deck, smashing everything as they went. The fiferails with their belaying pins were ground to kindling, with the result that the gear of both tops had gone adrift leaving the upper yards—royals and t'gallants—deprived of their supporting braces and swinging crazily from starboard to port and back again. At each lunge of the yards the topmasts swayed and bent as the brig rolled and pitched.

Her stern rose righ on the air on a wave and the eight cannons charged for'ard along the steeply-inclined deck, tumbling over each other and disappearing under the foc'sle head for an instant. Then, as the vessel's stern settled down in the trough of the seas and her bow rose, they came charging out of their hiding place and raced aft.

McTurk braced himself against the shock as the eight pieces of super-annuated ordnance crashed through the break of the poop as if it had been cardboard. He heard his cabin, messroom and chart-locker being ground to pulp and closed his eyes. When he opened them again he found that the bottom part of the poop ladder upon which he was standing had been taken along by one of the carronades.

By the comparative quiet that followed this Balaklavan disaster, he knew that the guns had become jammed among the wrecked timbers at last, so he eased himself to the deck and worked himself hand-over-hand along the splintered bulwarks, located the royal and t'gallant braces and got them fast to ring-bolts in the deck.

He was never quite clear how he managed to get through the rest of the night. By daylight the typhoon appeared to have given up the stout little *Falcon* as a bad job and had gone ahead on more important business. In the crepuscular dawn of a wan sun, McTurk saw the cutter wallowing in the choppy seas to starboard. Her mainmast and half of her foremast were gone. From its splintered top her ensign fluttered upside down.

McTURK and Mr. Murietta took stock of the damage to their own ship. Half of the bulwarks were gone. The bases of both masts had been chewed by the careening carronades as if a colony of infuriated beavers had been at work on them. The running gear was a tangle of ropes and swinging blocks and tackle. The deck house had been sheared off flush with the deck and gone overboard, taking the lifeboat and gig with it.

McTurk squinted at the *Wallaby* with the tattered ensign fluttering upside down from the stump of her foremast. His black eyes narrowed. It wasn't enough to have his ship a shambles: Fate had to hand him one more slap.

He was a thorough scoundrel. He would have swindled his own brother. He would not have hesitated to commit barratry, arson or the milder forms of murder to gain his ends, but he was a sailor before he was a scoundrel. To refuse help to brother mariners in distress was as foreign to him as it would for a sky-pilot to withhold the last rites from a dying cannibal. It was the unwritten law of the sea—even if he hadn't sat in on the making of it.

He cursed profoundly while his men went about getting the running gear untangled and a few sails on the vessel.

He took the wheel himself and maneuvered the brig as close to the cutter as he dared and crossly demanded via megaphone what the trouble was. The cutter's commander replied that his rudder was gone, that his engines had gone adrift from their moorings, and that his ship was leaking like a sieve and expected to sink within the hour.

Mr. Murietta, standing beside the skipper, grinned broadly.

"How sad," he sighed. "Shall I break out one of the old carronades and give 'em a salute as they go down, Cap'n?"

McTurk glared at him.

"You'll stand by the braces, Mr. Murietta," he snapped, "while I lay us alongside."

"Why—why—they'll slap us in the jug the minute we touch port!" the mate exclaimed.

"And I'll slap you in irons, Mr. Murietta, if you don't step lively at the braces," the skipper retorted.

The mate backed down the broken poop ladder muttering maledictions in Californian Spanish as the brig swung off in the trough of the seas, dropped astern of the cutter and came up alee of her.

"Pull your main top aback, Mr. Murietta," McTurk sang out, then as the yards swung around, "Avast, belay!"

The *Falcon* lost headway a hundred feet or so from the cutter. McTurk brought the helm up a little and the brig closed in until less than fifty feet separated the two ships.

"Stand by to take our heaving-line," he sang out to the cutter's commander. "Bend on an inch manila rope to it, Mr. Murietta," he told the mate, who complied sullenly. The weighted end of the heaving-line sailed through the air and the crew of the cutter pulled in the inch rope and made it fast.

"Sorry I haven't a bosun's chair, Lieutenant," McTurk called out to the cutter's commander. "You and your men'll have to come aboard hand-over-hand." Which they did.

The lieutenant was a young man from Melbourne with blue eyes and an embarrased air.

"I don't know what to say, sir," he told McTurk. "You've put me in a most equivocal position."

"How so?" the skipper inquired mildly.

The youth looked up the wind at his ship going down by the nose a hundred yards to starboard.

"Why—er—saving the lives of my crew and myself when it was to your—er—interest to let us go down."

"How d'you figure that out?" McTurk wanted to know.

"Well—under the circumstances—"

"What circumstances? No circumstances could arise under which I'd stand by and watch a sailor drown," McTurk retorted stiffly.

The young lieutenant cleared his throat.

"You realise that I'll be obliged to take over and sail your ship into port," he said, hanging his head.

"I'd advise you not to try it," McTurk retorted succinctly.

"But you have committed what amounts to an act of piracy, sir!"

"You mean in buying six thousand pounds of pearls from those yellow cut-throats?"

"With *their* money," the lieutenant pointed out.

"Who says so?" McTurk demanded. "Their head man came aboard alone. I have his receipt and bill-of-sale for the pearls."

"I know, but he told me—"

McTurk laughed long and loudly.

"Told you what? Don't you know better than believe anything a Jap tells you?"

"But—but you impersonated a vessel of Her Majesty's Navy—"

"I did *what?*" McTurk rejoined indignantly. "Do you mean to stand there and tell me that any court in the land could possibly mistake this brig for a man-o'-war?"

The lieutenant looked at the empty deck.

"Heaving the guns overboard won't help you," he said.

"You mean those old carronades I bought in a junk yard in Sydney for the Marine Museum in San Francisco? I didn't jettison them. Let me show you."

He took the lieutenant below. They picked their way through the wrecked cabins and mess room. The old cannons lay jammed against each other, some with their heavy wheels turned up like slain monsters of a prehistoric era.

"They went adrift and practically ruined the ship," McTurk said. "I should have stowed them in the hold," he added ruefully.

The lieutenant ran his hand through his hair.

"Nevertheless I shall have to make a full and detailed report about this," he sighed, "including your most efficient and heroic rescue of the personnel of Her Majesty's cutter *Wallaby*, at the risk of losing your own all-but-disabled vessel."

"Think nothing of it," McTurk replied.

"One question, Captain," the lieutenant said. "The little matter about the Queen's coming Jubilee. I assume that you can explain that satisfactorily?"

"Certainly," McTurk replied. "Let me show you. There is one in the lot which I picked out for Her Majesty. You'll agree with me that nothing finer for its size has ever come out of this part of the seas."

He straddled one of the cannons to get at his sea chest among the wreckage. It was jammed between one of the carronades and the bulkhead, badly crushed. He managed to pry the lid open and to locate the tin box containing the pearls. It was crushed flat as a concertina. Even before he got the buckled lid off, he knew the worst. As the lid dropped from his hands and he raised the black velvet in which the pearls had been packed, he drew a deep sigh.

All that was left of thirty thousand American dollars' worth of pearls of the first water was half a pint of coarse to fine white dust.

The Steamboat Breed

An Off-the-Trail Story

By ALLAN R. BOSWORTH

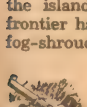
ILLUSTRATED BY NICK EGGENHOFER

THOSE things Eb Hotchkiss saw and and heard on a misty Aleutian ridge cannot reasonably be explained, and he tells them shyly at first, and then with a fiercely growing pride. Listening, you need to remember that Eb is an educated man, a Tennessean like Davy Crockett himself, and somewhat of an authority on the wealth of Crockett lore. You need to remember that if Davy Crockett *did* come back to see whether there are still Americans of the half horse, half alligator and half steamboat bred, Eb Hotchkiss would have recognized him.

To Eb it isn't a question of a man's returning after being dead these hundred years and more — because, as he points out, Davy Crockett's not a man, but a legend. He was the only American, Eb contends, to become a myth while he was still living.

That may be argued as you please. But certainly this war is too young for legends of its own, nor is it likely any of us will live to see its heroes attain the stature of such. Legends grow more slowly than they used to do. We have become a skeptical people, hailing those who explode myths rather than those who create them; we lack leisure even in time of peace, and for every man patient enough to weave a single fact into a bright tapestry there are thousands to shout that the pattern is not genuine. It has been generations since the mantles fell on the shoulders of Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill, and too long a time since firelight in a log cabin mellowed tales well and properly told. Legends and their makers moved west with the frontier, and the frontier was pushed into the Pacific.

But there are the islands to the westward, the islands shaken by war even before the frontier had arrived. There is, specifically, the fog-shrouded dot called Attu.



MACHINE guns stopped them. The guns and the Japs were up yonder in the mist's edge, commanding the backbone of the glacial ridge and the stark nakedness of a snow slope this side of it. They had knee mortars, too, and the snout of a 75-millimeter pack howitzer thrust skyward behind the perimeter of foxholes.

What was left of the American advance scouts huddled in the shelter of a tumble of boulders. They had moved up that slope twice, only to run into the machine-gun fire, and twice they had come sliding back to the rocks on their tails. Before very long the main body should be coming up the long valley from Massacre Bay, and the captain would expect that seventy-five to be out of action.

This was the sort of thing that turned sergeants gray, if they lived long enough. Sergeant Murray lay panting in the snow, still winded from that last scramble back into cover. He had led eight men this far, and now four of them were sprawled on the slope. Only Moody, Hotchkiss, DuBose, and that gambling private named Shockey and known to the entire company as the Shark, were left.

The sergeant considered his situation bitterly. In his opinion there were only three effectives—Moody, DuBose and himself. Hotchkiss was a queer duck who had taught school back in Tennessee; he wore glasses and was more interested in stories and songs from other parts of the country—folklore, he called it—than he was in learning the science of warfare. The Shark was worse. The Shark was more adept at goldbricking than any man Murray had ever seen; otherwise he had yet to exhibit a single soldierly attribute.

"Keep down, there!" the sergeant barked at Private Moody. "You want to get your neck sawed off?"

"This snow's cold," Moody objected.

"Snow," Hotchkiss drawled from his rock, "usually is. It's cold, and it's white. Except the blue snow Paul Bunyan—"

"For Christ's sake, pipe down and let me think!" the sergeant implored.

The Shark drew out his hunting knife and began whittling a chew of tobacco. He was a lean, sallow man somewhere near thirty, with cold eyes and a face that went perfectly with any kind of poker hand. He had squatted with his back to the biggest boulder, and was looking back down over the tundra bogs and the dreary patches of low leafless brush. Mist hung in the hollows and draped all the peaks; you couldn't see the ships out yonder or the piles of equipment landing barges had spewed onto the beach. Distant rifle-fire cracked and machine guns took up their chatter like erratic typewriters, but here under the ridge it was

quiet. The cold bit into a man's soggy clothing, into his blood and bone. The Japs were waiting.

Sergeant Murray drew a deep breath. "There ought to be air support before long," he said hopefully. "One egg from an SBD would do the trick."

"Yeah?" the Shark doubted. He could talk without seeming to move his lips. "How's the pilot gonna see? How'd he keep from crashing into a hill? I'll bet you—"

"You don't bet *me* anything, soldier!" Murray snapped. "Not any more!"

Eb Hotchkiss chuckled. He was not a gambling man. The others had dropped plenty to the Shark coming up on the transport.

Moody said, "Well, Sarge, what we gonna do? Squat here till our duffs freeze?"

"I don't know," the sergeant admitted. "But somehow we got to clean out them monkeys!"

"Listen," the Shark said, pointing his knife at Murray for emphasis. "It'd take a hundred men! A little bunch like us don't stand a prayer. Let's go back and get warm somewhere!"

Hotchkiss doesn't remember the sergeant's answer, except that it was profane. It was just then that he noticed the Shark's knife.

You don't see the kind any more. Jim Bowie designed them, and it has been related that he used one so effectively on a sand bar below Natchez-Under-the-Hill that he was forced to make tracks for Texas. Even before Davy Crockett followed, to die with him at the Alamo, such knives bore Bowie's name. This one had a white bone handle with brass rivets and a blade long enough to tickle a fat man's spine.

"Let's see that!" Hotchkiss exclaimed. "Where'd you get it?"

"It was issued to me," the Shark told him. "Some club started a campaign for people to send in their shivs. You like it?"

Hotchkiss held out his hand, and the Shark reached the knife toward him. Even that movement brought a Jap bullet zipping between the rocks and kicking up a flurry of snow downhill. The Shark dropped the knife and jerked his arm back.

Hotchkiss saw the initials then. They looked as if they had been cut high on the blade with a cold chisel. They were still plain, for all the whetting a century might have brought, and they said D. C.

" . . . was a tag tied to it," the Shark was saying. "I don't remember exactly what it said. Something about how this was an Indian knife, a Comanche's."

"Sure!" breathed Ed Hotchkiss. "It *was* a Comanche's knife. But that was after Crockett took it to Texas and killed a panther with it. He gave it to the Comanche chief that day when they came upon Thimblerig, sitting on the prairie—"

He stopped abruptly, conscious that the others were staring at him. The sergeant said, "*Thimblerig?* What the hell are you talking about?"

Hotchkiss said, "Davy Crockett—" and the wind came up just then, as suddenly as only the Aleutian wind can start. It shrieked over the ridge and down it, tearing the fog apart and howling into the long valley. As if this had been a signal, the American 105's that were somewhere down there began hurling their thunder at the ridge.

The sergeant leaped to his fet. "Now you're talking!" he yelled. "Pour it on the yellow bastards! Soften 'em up a little, and we'll polish 'em off!"

IT WAS something to hear the shells whistling above and to see the wet earth leap into the sky with the explosions on the ridge. But the guns were firing a little too high. Eb Hotchkiss wanted to shout down the valley, wanted to tell the gunners to lower their sights. But he could barely make out the triple flashes as the pieces fired by threes; the guns were a long way off.

"Get set, you guys!" Murray told them. "The minute this lifts, we're going up there. Get your hand grenades ready!"

The wind kept howling over the ridge, but mist still clung to the higher peaks, and it would have been a job for any plane to try spotting the fire. The five men huddled shivering behind the boulders, and the wind searched them out and knifed their wet clothes while they waited.

It wasn't long, as Eb Hotchkiss remembers, although it seemed like hours at the time. There was a lull in the wind and the fog dropped immediately, this time covering the crest of the ridge itself. The guns down the valley ceased their clamor, and among the boulders it was as still and cold as death itself for the space of a few watch ticks.

Then the sergeant drew a deep breath. He wasn't shivering any longer.

"All right, you guys!" he said. "This time we'll make the top. Don't forget to stoop over. Hotchkiss, you and Moody move out to the right. Shark, you and DuBose left. I'll play center on this team."

The Shark spat tobaco juice into the snow.

"Not me," he said without expression. "I ain't going."

The sergeant breathed hard. "You heard me!" he growled.

"Sure. And you heard me. I ain't a damned fool. The odds are a thousand to one none of us will get there. I don't take that kind of odds."

"You're a damned stinking coward!" the sergeant choked. "It's an order, understand? You go, or—"

"I ain't afraid!" the Shark denied. "But I ain't crazy, either. It'll take more than a little bunch like us."

Moody spat into the snow, too. He said, "The hell with him, Sarge—let's get going! Take care of this guy later!"

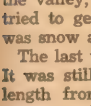
The sergeant gave the Shark one withering look, then turned and started up the hill. The others fanned out and ran with him, slipping and floundering in the snow.

Eb Hotchkiss will never forget that part of it, although he had a queer, detached feeling about it all. He heard a shout and realized with some surprise that it was his own voice; he remembers that his heart was pounding hard and that his breath smoked and fogged his glasses. There was warmth in his stomach, where something melted and crawled; the rest of his body was cold. He heard the machine guns snarling, saw snow fly where the bullets raked, and out of the corner of his eye he glimpsed the sergeant falling with a blank, incredulous look on his face.

Then the right side of his helmet rang like a sledge on an anvil on a frosty morning. The force of this spun Eb around; he found himself going downhill and feeling, all at once, as light as a feather. He dug heels into the snow and checked his descent, but the wind was about to blow him away, so he dropped to hands and knees and clung to the earth.

A roaring darkness seemed to be moving up the valley, and there was no escaping it. He tried to get to his feet again, and then there was snow against his cheek.

The last thing he remembered was the knife. It was still lying in the snow, only an arm's length from him. He could see the initials Davy Crockett cut into the blade.



THERE is no knowing how long Eb Hotchkiss lay senseless among the boulders, or what happened before he opened his eyes. He remembers a great rushing of wind, common enough on Attu, and the sting of sleet against his face. Then his senses came back one by one until he became conscious of the sharp, clean smell of powder smoke blown across his nostrils, and the sound of firing close at hand.

Eb lifted himself on an elbow. That smell was like firecrackers on the Fourth of July. The firing was regular enough, but slow, and the guns made more of a booming noise, with none of the vicious crack of a Springfield or Garand. Sleet was still driving horizontally across the slope, pitting the untrampled snow like so much coarse salt, and there was only a half light.

Out of this dimness the Shark came crawling toward Eb. For the first time he had lost that poker face; he had puzzlement in his eyes now, and Eb knew something had happened.

"Look!" the Shark whispered. "Who're these guys? There wasn't any natives up here, was there? And they couldn't be Alaskan scouts, not in the screwy rigs they're wearing!"

"Who're you talking about?" Eb asked.

The Shark pointed. Eb squinted into the murk and made out the vague shapes of men among the farther boulders. That was where the shooting was, and he saw that a double flash went with every shot—first a brightness near the heads of the men, and then a lurch of flame six feet from them. He saw this, and knew that the men were using long rifles.

"How are they dressed?" Eb asked, although by this time he had a pretty good idea in spite of the buzzing that had set up in his head.

"Well," the Shark said, "a couple of them are rigged out like—well, like Buffalo Bill, if you remember him. Only they're wearing fur caps, with tails on 'em like you see on radiator caps sometimes. Then there's one who looks like an Indian, and another who's got a high hat, only it's white. And the other—"

"You mean two of them are in buckskin, with coonskin hats?" Eb broke in.

The Shark nodded. "I guess that's it," he said.

Eb was excited now, but he insists he wasn't at all surprised. His excitement was purely anticipatory.

"Why, then," he said, "it's Davy Crockett himself, come to help us. And he's brought along Thimblerig, and the Bee Hunter, and—"

"Wait a minute, soldier!" the Shark scoffed. "I read about Crockett in school. He's been dead a long time."

Eb laughed and pulled himself to his feet. He felt all right except for that queer buzzing inside his skull.

"Sure," he told the Shark, "Davy fell at the Alamo. But you can't kill a legend, you know, any more than you could silence a favorite song by burning all the copies. That's the way it is with Davy Crockett—that's how it's always been. I'll go over and say hello!"

He started, too, thinking how wonderful it would be when he told the school about this back in Stooping Oak, Tennessee. But just then a tall figure in buckskin came toward them, holding his head slightly to one side and examining the snow like a keen-eyed hunter looking for deer tracks. He was more than six feet tall, and broad of shoulder, with a high color in his face for all of its bone-deep tan, and he wore his black hair long. The long rifle was cradled in the crook of his arm as tenderly as a baby.

Eb Hotchkiss recognized him at once, and stooped to pick up the Bowie knife.

"Howdy, Colonel," Eb said. "I'm Eb Hotchkiss from Tennessee, and I'm mighty glad to see you. You were looking for this, I reckon."

"Eh?" said Davy, looking a little startled and then considerably pleased. 'Why, I wish I may be shot if I wasn't doing just that, for sartin!

But how you knowed I was looking for it beats me!"

"Why, I recognized the knife, Colonel," Eb said. "And I thought maybe that's what you came back for."

Davy frowned, and when he did that the wind howled and the sleet drove harder. But the frown didn't last long.

"Come back?" he repeated, and laughed. "Why, I ain't never been away, exactly. No, I didn't come up here to this infernal climate just to find a Bowie knife. It was a leetle more important than that."

The Shark was looking at him with his mouth open. Eb said respectfully, "Could you tell us what brought you here, Colonel?"

Davy laughed again. "Why, for sartin!" he said. "I reckon it ain't anything to make a fuss about, though. Not after what I've seen."

HE looked down into the long valley, and Eb looked too. There was a rift in the fog and Eb could see the main body of the Americans moving up from Massacre Bay. He could see that Davy Crockett thought everything was going to be all right.

"I always did like to get my spoon in a mess of this kind!" Davy was saying in a half-apologetic tone. "Fact is, every time we have a good scrap I feel wolfish all over. But this time I got a leetle mite worried, too, thinking about things in general. You see, this island ain't worth shucks when it comes to settlers, but then, it's a part of the United States. So when I learnt it was invaded, why, I says to myself it's time I took my beautiful Betsy down"—and he patted the long rifle—"and seen what was going on. I was a leetle mite afeared this country was running short of men. I mean regular rip-snortin' roarers—men of the half horse, half alligator and half steamboat breed!"

"Well, Colonel?" Eb prompted when he stopped.

Davy Crockett grinned. Eb remembered the stories they used to tell about that famous smile. Davy could grin down a treed coon; he used to save ammunition that way. Maybe, Eb thought, he could grin those Japanese right out of their foxholes.

"There's still enough of the breed left!" Davy said emphatically. "I could have left my companions behind, as far as that goes. But they wanted to come."

He looked over his shoulder, and Eb noticed for the first time that the Shark had walked over to the other group while Davy was talking. Now the Shark was on his knees in the snow with a long, gaunt, bareheaded man, and the other three men were leaning on their rifles watching them.

"It's under the middle thimble!" the Shark exclaimed.

"You've got a sharp eye, stranger," the lank man answered. "But I'm afraid you've lost your bet. You see—"

"Thimblerig!" roared Davy Crockett in a voice that shook snow off the high ledges. "Blast you, Thimblerig, there's work to be done! Put up your damned thimbles and look to your rifle!"

He strode their way and Eb Hotchkiss trotted beside him. Thimblerig had inveigled the Shark into a game of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't on the crown of his tall Vicksburger hat, and it was apparent from the discomfiture on the Shark's face that he had lost a bet—the first in a long time.

Eb studied the others and recognized the Pirate, the Comanche chief, and the Bee Hunter, all of whom, with the exception of the Indian, had gone into the Alamo with Crockett. Of the four companions, the Bee Hunter, as tall as Davy himself and neatly garbed in fringed buckskin with Indian ornaments on his ammunition pouch, was the most striking. But it was his eyes, dark and piercing, which held Eb's attention. It was easy to imagine that the Bee Hunter used to sight bees in their bullet-like flight and follow them unerringly to their trees.

"Look to your guns!" Davy told them all sternly. "The varmints are still in their holes. It's up to us to smoke 'em out before they turn those infernal new-fangled guns on our troops coming yonder!"

The sleet had stopped and mist hung thick over the Jap foxholes, so that Eb Hotchkiss seldom saw anything to shoot at. But the Bee Hunter was loading and firing steadily, and so was Davy Crockett, and the others. Except the Shark. He had borrowed Thimblerig's thimbles and his pea and was squatting behind a boulder trying to become as dexterous as the man from Natchez-Under-the-Hill.

But Eb had no time to observe the Shark. It was a joy, he says, to watch Davy Crockett handle his beloved rifle. After each shot Davy blew carefully through the barrel to make certain it was clear, and then he inspected his flint and wiped it dry, and ran a feather through the touch hole. The way he tipped powder out of his horn and followed it with wadding and lead was dexterity itself.

"Of course," Davy was saying as he blew down the barrel as lovingly as a kiss, "you heard how I came by her. She was given to me by the Young Whigs of Philadelphia. I had to make a leetle speech of acceptance. I told them if it should ever become necessary for me to use her in defense of the liberty of our country, I would do as I had done before." With that, he finished ramming the charge home and lifted the gun to his shoulder. Eb saw a Jap climb out of his foxhole and scurry, rat-like, for the pack howitzer. "So," Davy continued, "here I am!"

He let the hammer fall. The pan flashed, the flame leaped from the long barrel, and the Jap dropped in his tracks.

BUT Eb could see that things were going against them. The long rifles were too slow, and that buzzing in his head was worse, so that he could scarcely draw a bead with his Springfield. The Shark was still practicing with the thimbles, yonder, and Japs were beginning to run along the ridge to the 75-millimeter pack howitzer. Once they got there, they were out of sight.

Davy Crockett turned to look down the valley, and anybody could see what the seventy-five could do to the troops coming up it. Then Davy glanced toward the Shark.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "What's this—another Thimblerig? This is no time for thimbles and peas, my friend. We need your gun, here."

"Want to make a little bet?" the Shark asked.

"Get up!" Davy told him. "Thimblerig, come get your play pretties."

Both of them obeyed. There was something in Davy Crockett's voice that made it impossible to do otherwise than obey; it had in it the ring of command, and a note of reproach that made the Shark look ashamed.

"What's in that sack?" Davy asked.

"Hand grenades," the Shark answered.

"I've heard about them," Davy nodded. "We didn't have such fixin's at the Alamo. If we had, things might have—"

He checked himself and turned to look up the slope in time to see the Bee Hunter cut down another running Jap. But a full crew had reached the howitzer, and now its muzzle lifted and turned toward the valley.

"It didn't matter in the long run," Davy went on. "We were in the right, and we knowed it. That's the main thing. Be sure you're right—then go ahead!"

The Shark said, half-sullenly, "Are you trying to preach to me?"

"No," and Davy Crockett grinned. "But I'll tell you what I told Thimblerig that time—that if you cannot live like an honest man you can die like a brave one, which is more important. Most men are remembered as they died, and not as they lived."

"So what?" asked the Shark.

Davy Crockett pointed to the hand grenades. "You know how to use them," he said, speaking very softly. "We'll cover your advance with rifle fire. The rest is up to you."

"One man? Why, the odds—"

"It's up to you," Davy Crockett repeated. "Your friend here"—and he indicated Eb Hotchkiss—"has had a bad knock on his head in spite of that kettle he's wearing. But you might make it. I know this: if one American of the proper breed gets started up that hill, the Japs might as well try to twist a streak of blue lightning into a true lover's knot as to stop him!"

"But—" began the Shark.

"And I'll go with you," said Davy Crockett, pulling down his coonskin cap and getting that terrible frown on his face. "And I'll swallow a couple of them varmints without gagging if you'll only skewer back their ears and grease their heads a little—I wish I may be shot if I don't! Go ahead!"

He wasn't speaking softly any more, but in a voice that reminded Eb Hotchkiss of the American 105's rumbling in the valley. He gave the Shark's sleeve a tug, and started out on a run.

And the Shark suddenly lifted his head high and plucked a hand grenade out of the sack. "Go ahead, Crockett!" he exclaimed. "We'll give 'em hell!"

The long rifles began popping. Eb remembers getting his Springfield across a boulder and working the bolt, but he didn't hear the sound of his own shots. All he could hear was Davy Crockett's thunderous voice.

"Oh, wake, snakes, and walk your chalks!" Davy was shouting as he ran. "Hell fire and brimstone! Go ahead! Liberty and independence forever!"

The wind sprang up suddenly, blasting furiously across the ridge, tearing a man's thoughts apart. Snow and sleet began driving into Eb's face, and the mists rolled down from the high places. He had one last glimpse of a tall man in buckskin and a skinny, unheroic-looking figure in khaki, as they vanished into the swirl.

After that the explosions came. They began loudly, and Eb felt the ground shaking under his feet, and in between the blasts were a wild yell and the single pop of a long rifle. It was just at this time that a Japanese knee mortar dropped its shell squarely among the boulders.

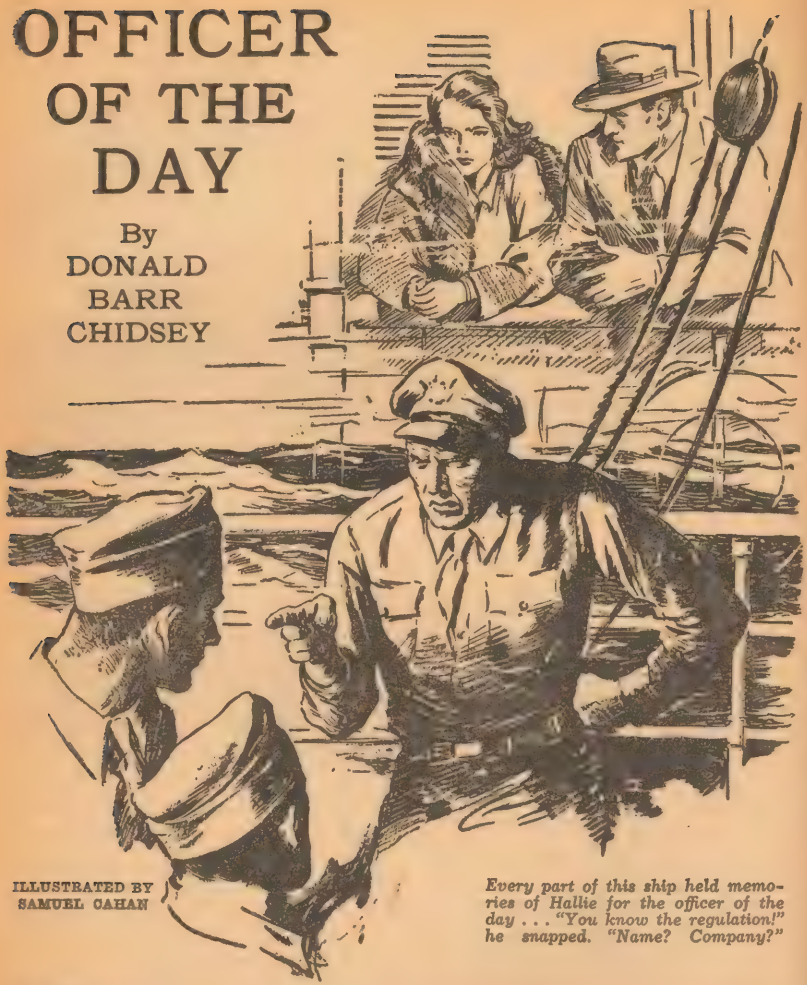
They had picked a dozen pieces of shrapnel out of Eb Hotchkiss when he awoke in the field hospital, and it was a week before he had recovered sufficiently to try piecing together the confused reports which drifted in through unofficial channels. But a Texan on the next cot said he had been with the main body, and related how they had gone right over the pass to join the forces from Holtz Bay.

"All we run into," he said, "was a few snipers that had to be pulled out of their holes like rats. But some of our boys had sure made a mess of things on top of that ridge! There was Japs blowed into little pieces by hand grenades and there was Japs with their throats cut. And some had round bullet holes right between their eyes! We couldn't figure that last one out."

Eb Hotchkiss could, but when he started to tell his story the doctor came and gave him a shot in the arm. That shows you what a skeptical people we have become.

OFFICER OF THE DAY

By DONALD BARR CHIDSEY



ILLUSTRATED BY SAMUEL CAHAN

Every part of this ship held memories of Hallie for the officer of the day . . . "You know the regulation!" he snapped. "Name? Company?"

THE officer of the day quit the smoking-saloon which was a smoking-saloon no longer but severely an office, its shiny maple desks and dark green steel filing-cases primly reproving what remained of its frivolity—gilded mahogany pilasters, and murals depicting the pursuit of country maidens by avid country lads, Regency orgies, and convivial gatherings of mellow hunting cronies who played cards while they drank mellow ale out of pewter tankards.

The officer of the day sighed; but you could not have heard the sigh, nor seen evidence of it on his face.

There had once been huge comfortable leather chairs in that room, and no swivel chairs or straightbacks. He and Hallie had used to sit in two of those chairs, taking an hour over a single unaccustomed cocktail, not talking much, just looking into each other's eyes fondly. That had been in a certain far corner of the room, which, with the connivance of a sympathetic bar steward, they had considered their own.

The officer of the day tried not to glance in the direction of that corner when he went out upon the promenade.

The sea was flat and smooth and glassily blue; the far high white clouds as unconvincing as a picture postcard. There was almost no breeze, and the stink of sweat was heavy and thick. Men lay everywhere about the deck, in small twisted clumps, sitting upon their lifebelts or resting their elbows or heads on them. A few, in close, intensely personal groups, played cards; and the officer of the day looked sharp to see whether there was any cash in these games, or any matchsticks which would serve as poker chips. The players became very casual in manner when he passed, and he could almost hear the unmuttered words that stirred in their throats after he'd gone. This did not faze him. He knew his duty.

If he had to be a soldier, damn it, he'd do a good job.

He and Hallie had sailed through the tropics too, on their first, and what they firmly supposed would prove to be their last, ocean voyage. It had, in fact, been Hallie's last. But that had been in another ocean, in a better time.

No sight-seers at heart, but out to enjoy one another, they had loved this ship and her lavish comforts and luxury. They'd gone ashore, of course. They had ascended a mountain on muleback to scramble over Henri Christophe's citadel, they had prowled the marketplace of Port-au-Prince, been driven out to the Bog Walk in Jamaica, gaped at Willemstad's swinging bridge. But they had always been glad to get back to the ship. They'd taken no part in the organized games and deck sports, but instead spent long happy hours right here on this promenade, stretched in deck chairs a bit apart from the others, side by side very close, gazing out over an horizon that now dipped a little below the rail and now rose a little above it. Sometimes, not looking at one another, and when nobody was walking past, they had quietly squeezed hands.

"*You!* Where's your lifebelt?" snapped the officer of the day.

"It's just right down there, sir. I only came—"

"Stand at attention when you're spoken to, private!"

"Yes, sir. I left it there just a second, to come over and bum a match. It's just—"

"Report for E. D." The officer of the day took out pad and fountain pen. "Name?"

EVERY part of this ship had for him some memory he could not ignore. The cardroom was a lecture room now, but he remembered it as the place where Hallie had made her first laughable try at contract bridge. They'd played with that young couple from Buffalo, honeymooners like themselves, and convenient acquaintances who didn't push an acquaintanceship too far. The ballroom, where sometimes they had danced, slowly and blissfully and perhaps not very well—the previous night he had attended a talk on beach attack there, to find the place crammed with folding chairs and stripped of all its glitter, the thick, luxurious carpets gone, the massive gilt orchestra shell removed.

Back of that ballroom, which opened upon it through French windows, had been a palm terrace, a place of spindly green chairs and rather self-conscious umbrellas striped in many colors, where he and Hallie had often sat over after-dinner coffee and crème de menthe packed with shaved ice. He could not resist a glance at that terrace when he came out of the glass-enclosed promenade and into the ship's waist. It was a gray square mass of wooden penthouses now, bunkhouses crowded with soldiers.

The swimming-pool was packed solid with gear and had been roofed with planking, on which a physical training instructor was putting a group through calisthenics. "*One*-two! *One*-two!" Sneakered feet thumped rhythmically and the men sprang into the air, swinging their arms above their heads. The officer of the day had taught a frightened Hallie to swim there.

A man scrambled down from a boom, where he'd been sitting.

"Well?"

"I just went up a minute, sir. To get a little air. I thought maybe—"

"You know the regulation. Name? What's your company?"

When Hallie died he had been two thousand miles away. He'd asked for leave, which was denied; and it was then that he'd known they would sail soon, for the colonel was decent about that sort of thing ordinarily. "Awfully sorry, Hayes. Your first, too, eh? Simply can't do it, though." Women did survive childbirth, the colonel had added jocularly, trying to cheer him up.

Hallie had not survived. She'd had a hemorrhage. And the baby had been stillborn.

Two days later the division had embarked. On this ship.

The officer of the day dreaded most to go aft, for it was on the after-deck, in a little half-moon behind the rudder house, that they used to stand hour by hour, late at night, and watch the upsurging turbulent wake that sparkled with phosphorus while it spewed lace to right and left. They used to stand with her arm around his waist, his arm across her shoulders. There wasn't anything unique about it. Lovers have always stood that way, looking at sunsets or at the sea. But the officer of the

(Continued on page 142)

An Adventure of "Koropok"

Tatsu broke in on Davies' story. "Please to wait. The best is last," he said. "I will now show you the exact dying of an Amerika-jin!"

ILLUSTRATED BY HAMILTON GREENE

IF THE Japanese soldiers, sailors and civilians who walked on the dimmed-out Tokyo street had known that the despised Ainu pariah who shuffled cringingly along between pavement and car-tracks was an American, they would have smashed him down before the traffic-directing policeman at the near intersection could have turned and shouted approval. If they had also known that the stocky, dark, bearded man was an officer in Air Forces engaged in the performance of his duty, Lieutenant Llewelyn Davies would not have resembled anything human when the Japanese were finished with him.

A *rickisha*-man, approaching the shambling figure, obeyed the order of the half-drunken soldier in his cart and swerved so suddenly that he brought a shaft of the *rikisha* heavily against the ragged man's ribs.

Davies made no effort to maintain balance. He fell weakly, just as a pariah would have fallen, and sprawled into a puddle, sending water splashing out. Covering his head with his arms, he waited for the customary beating.

The soldier yelled, above the laughter of the onlookers, *"Teppo motaba uchikorosu no desu?* How dare you get in my way, Ainu dog?"

THE WAR-FAN

By SIDNEY HERSCHEL SMALL

Davies cowered lower.

"Abunai yo!" he heard a different voice cry out, but not at him. The shriller voice added, "Take care, soldier! When I desire to bathe, I do it at the proper time and in the proper place!"

"You sailors bathe in the ocean," the soldier retorted, "and I have heard that the *Amerikajin* select the time and place for it."

By carefully looking over one arm during the silence following the interchange of insults, Lew saw that the seaman had been well spattered by drops from the muddy puddle. A year ago, the pair would have been apologizing and smiling and bowing because of the incident; now, they snarled.

Davies knew why. Despite the most rigid censorship, the Japanese army knew what had really taken place at the "victories" which the Japanese navy claimed; and the navy knew the truth of army "advances to the true sphere of defense." Each was beginning to blame the other for losses, and at last a little trickle of truth was beginning to seep through to the civilians at home.

We must be really putting on the pressure, thought Lew. *We must be hitting them pretty hard, because we've got them squabbling.*

It was more than enough to make a fellow who had seen no Americans except prisoners feel pretty good, not only because it was more proof that matters were no longer going so well for the Japanese, but because it seemed proof to Davies, as he lay there on the street, that what he was planning made sense.

The argument had continued. As more sailors gathered around their mate who had been spattered, the offended seaman shouted, "Ho! What a brave soldier! One who has never so much as smelled blood! When you leave Japan," the seaman taunted, "you will not return until you are ashes. Soldiers who have been fighting never receive furloughs, lest their behavior at home be like their behavior abroad—"

"Nanda ore ga yotteru mono ka!" screamed the soldier. "Do you say that I am drunk? Do you insult the Army?"

Lew saw that other soldiers were coming out into the street, to stand interestedly beside the *rikisha*.

"You cannot be insulted," another sailor called out. "If the Navy were not always forced to carry you away from island after island—"

"Sa! If the Army could receive ammunition and reinforcements . . . if the Navy were not fearful of *Amerika-jin* submarines and aircraft—"

The seaman who had been spattered could stand no more. He had leaped out into the street, and at the same moment the soldier in the *rikisha* jumped down to meet him, slobbering in his rage.

THE policeman at the intersection, although unable to see exactly what mgiht be taking place, began to blow his whistle frantically because of the stoppage of traffic. Amazingly, in Japan, no dutiful obedience followed the tooting.

While the horrified civilians, men and women alike, stared in silence, soldier and sailor met and sought for a maiming blow. Both, as they missed and grappled, were flung from their feet as their companions tore out and joined in the struggle. Davies was at the bottom of the pile of enraged men.

If these skunks knew who I am, he thought as he continued to protect his head with his arms, *they'd turn me into mementoes to be taken home to the children. See what papa has brought home! A nice* Amerika-jin *eyeball!*

He had known what would happen to him, were his disguise penetrated, even when he himself had suggested the assignment in Manila at the outbreak of hostilities. For two years now he had been "Koropok," the Ainu pariah. In appearance he was remarkably similar to the original inhabitants of Japan, who had been driven to the mountainous northern provinces by the conquering Japanese. He had lived there as a boy with his father, a doctor; he spoke the language of the Aniu and knew their customs. His disguise, even in a spy-fearful land, had thus far proven perfect; a slip, at any time, meant torture and death.

When he first reached Tokyo, working his way down from the north where he had been set ashore in fog, he repaired *geta,* clogs, until edged tools were taken from all non-Japanese by the nervous police. After that, Davies managed to exist by becoming a vendor of cheap food, which also had allowed him to get about the capital of the empire and discover the things he could do to cause trouble for the Nipponese.

He had marked the objective for a flight of American bombers. He had destroyed the Jap's supply of an oil used to give strength and resilience to military airframe construction. He had ruined an aircraft experimental plant as completely as bombs could have done. Now, because the worried Japanese were moving factories away from Tokyo as Allied bombers came nearer and nearer within range, Davies had been forced to figure out another means of causing them misery.

It was his wandering about the city, his being treated by the Japanese as if he were an animal and unable to understand what they might be saying, which had given him this new notion. And what was taking place above him, the antagonism which was developing between the branches of the Japanese war machine, seemed proof that his plan was based on something more than hope.

But what I'll do, and what I'll be, thought Lew, because he felt that he must hold down the immediate desire which surged through him and the best way to do it was to think about something else, *will make me lower than even the Nips could imagine for an American. Yes, I'll be something!*

Searching fingers stroked his neck, seeking a muscle to twist. Davies had to use force to get away from them.

It was then he realized that, buried as he was at the bottom of the heap, there was no way that the snarling, squirming mass of Japanese could know his neck for a pariah's neck at all. It had been a soldier who had sought for the maiming grasp; Davies' bare neck would cause the soldier to believe the neck was that of a uniformed sailor. Neither soldiers nor sailors could see him; he was just another man mixed up in the ugly brawl.

What do you know? Lew grinned. *I've been waiting for a chance like this for two long years. Boy!*

He slipped his right arm away from his head, bringing it to his side. He had to wait an instant, he who had waited for two years, and

it seemed a long time. Then, still grinning, but cold as ice down to his bare toes, he got his chance. Into the short blow he struck, Davies put all of the repressed thoughts and all the previously restrained strength of his hard, stocky body. His fist exploded against a brown Japanese nose, flattening it even more than it had been before; his fist came away warm and wet with blood.

His own blood tingled. It was a magnificent sensation.

That was for the men who bombed Tokyo and were murdered for carrying out their proper military orders. And now I'm going to give you a little something on account to pay you for the way prisoners are treated in Japan. See how you like this, you slime-blooded devils!

Lew arched his legs slightly, getting the toes of both feet pressed down to the street so he could get purchase. Someone was trying to gnaw at his shoulder, and he had to push up, squirm, and rub the Japanese sailor's bullet head off by shoving it against whoever was above. Another Japanese' fingers were slipping along Davies' left arm, striving for a maiming grip at the armpit; Lew had to maneuver the fellow away.

The smell of the Japanese, a combination of sweat, giant radish, and cheap perfume, was in Davies' nostrils. Their snarls and grunts and hisses and blasphemies were in his ears. But it was all very wonderful, because they were fighting one another. Nothing like this had ever happened before.

The man disguised as the pariah Koropok had to struggle and twist in order to get a little space for his right arm again.

Then Lew's lips formed, "Here's one for the prisoners."

This time his fist sunk deep into a belly, and Davies heard with pleasure the gasp of the Japanese who had received the short, fierce blow. What was even better, the Nipponese slumped, a dead weight, across the prone form of the American at the bottom of the heap of struggling bodies.

THE man who was knocked out must have been a soldier, for Davies' knuckles were smarting and probably cut from a belt buckle.

I'll bet I marked his belly more than his buckle has marked my hand, thought Lew with glowing satisfaction. *He won't enjoy his food tomorrow.*

Then he sobered. If either man whom he had struck recognized the dreaded *Amerika-jin* manner of fighting-with-fists, the cut knuckle would direct suspicion toward the pariah Koropok. And even if the suspicion could not be turned into satisfactory proof, he would be killed merely because the rival branches of the service would want a source for their rage.

What he had been doing, he told himself, was a pleasure, and not duty at all. It was the freeing of his long bottled-up feeling, of his anger; and he had to quit it.

He did. He groveled down, pariah-fashion, merely protecting himself as best he could, while soldiers and sailors brawled and bit and scratched. But those two blood-bright blows had done a lot for him. He felt more like Llewelyn Davies, and less like Koropok the Ainu pariah, than at any time since he had assumed the disguise.

It was a good thing he felt so swell, he thought, as he ducked away from raking claws, because before very long, if his plan worked out as he intended, he would become the lowest form of life in Tokyo. He wondered, grinning a little as he lay at the bottom of the pile, what his fellow-officers or his old C.O. would say if they could have known what he wanted to become.

He intended to get himself engaged as a *hakoya*, a man who escorted geisha girls from their quarters to the restaurants where they entertained guests.

It would take some doing, but Davies believed it could be managed. Only the oldest men performed this duty now, and they were invariably being sworn at or discharged for their lack of agility. Their duties were of a nature which were not considered disgraceful in Japan, but which caused Americans to gag. However, in escorting the girls to the places where they were engaged, *hakoya* certainly saw men who at other times were surrounded by bodyguards.

This, of course, was well known; and on it Davies' plan was based. What he intended to do if he were able to get himself such a job was exceedingly simple. He believed that it would be effective, because he had listened to the way in which civilians were whispering to one another about this war which was now bringing Japan only the ashes of the dead.

He would say, in a food-stall or fried-fish shop, "General—oh, I dare not speak so important a name!—was entertained last night."

The Japanese, *rikisha*-men and clerks and laborers, would snarl at him for being an Ainu; but Davies knew their huge curiosity. After they had cursed him, they would press for details, the details of food and drink and entertainment by geisha which they themselves would have liked to experience.

"*Ma!*" Davies would say, enviously. "What beautiful girls were ordered for the party! What fine saki was enjoyed . . . Oh, so many bottles! How generous the general was! Observe what remains of the tip which was given me!"

The Japanese would probably take from the pariah whatever coins he displayed; the feel of money, wasted by being given to an Ainu, would put them in exactly the proper state of

mind for the sort of thing which Davies would then say.

"The general is no longer a poor man. Not any more."

He would be questioned about that, too. He would say nothing until the Japanese threatened him.

Koropok would then whisper, "The general has the entire opium concession for seven cities in China. That is why he is no longer poor."

Word of this would spread from listening clerk to receptive and hungry wife and friends . . . just as other rumors had reached Davies' ears when he had been repairing *geta* and selling cheap food.

How far would he dare go in putting thoughts in the Japanese' heads?

He had a chance to test this out now. He was certain that the policeman from the intersection must be dancing around at the edge of the milling mass of soldiers and sailors, and grabbing at any arms and legs which could be reached. No mere yelled order would stop the brawl.

Here goes, thought Lew.

Not in the guttural Ainu dialect at all, but in middle-province Japanese, Davies snarled, *"Maketa ni ch'gai wa nai!* The policeman is clubbing soldiers! He is clubbing sailors! He is attacking all of us! *Aita!"*

A muffled voice growled, "Is that true?" and, with the words, Davies felt the speaker attempting to pull himself away from the furious tangle.

"Kore!" some other Japanese crackled. "This cannot be permitted!"

The men around Davies and above him no longer sought to injure anyone within reach who, from the feel of the uniform could be determined to be in the opposite branch of the service. Even as the pile began to untangle, doing it badly because of the very haste, Lew could hear opinions regarding policemen who remained safely at home while sailors were being burned to death on ships bombed by the damnable *Amerika-jin* flying men or lost at sea because of the equally terrible *Amerika-jin* submarines . . . and while soldiers were now forced to face *Amerika-jin* land forces with choice of death by steel or starvation.

I'm on the beam, thought Lew quietly. *It works. And if it works here, it will work even better when I drop a little careful poison into the ears of hungry clerks to take home for their wives to pass on.*

In no other way at the moment, Davies was sure, could he cause more trouble for Japan. Coming from a degraded *hakoya,* a servant in the Yoshiwara, his stories would be believed as things overheard when some important military official had been in his cups, surrounded by geisha, boastful and flushed with liquor.

THE weight above him was quickly becoming less. When he was able to get to his knees, and then to his feet, the policeman had already scampered off, probably chased by some of the soldiers and sailors. It gave Lew satisfaction to see that one of the Japanese was wiping blood from face and uniform, while another was vomiting from the smash in the belly which Davies had given him.

To have moved off, however inconspicuously, would have meant that the pariah would be remembered as the cause of the entire fight. So Lew remained motionless.

The street lights were dimmed, as were the lights of the shop windows of the big stores. There were the usual portable stalls on the pavement, for people too poor and timid to enter the foreign-style buildings. But the street did not resemble Japan before the attack on the United States. There were a few tinkles of the alarm bells on *rikishas;* but the honking of automobiles, the whistles of trains at the nearby station, the rumble of tramcars, were all gone. Only the beggars remained.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the east and west, something for an old sick one who now has no sons!"

The old woman who shouted this, vying with other beggars, had a shrill voice which rose above the others; Davies, standing in the street, could see her and the infant balanced on her knee.

He saw her and, perhaps of all of the throng, he saw a small man not in kimono, accompanied by a geisha, attempt to elude the beggar's outstretched hand.

Davies had been stationed at Manila. The small man, with a very dark and pockmarked face, was almost certainly a Filipino. One of the countless "commissioners" who, ordered to Tokyo, returned to attempt to bring the propaganda of "co-prosperity" to the men in the Commonwealth. Hated men.

Here was another and equally good opportunity to make absolutely certain that the Nipponese, alarmed at the way in which the war was beginning to go, were ready to listen to trouble-makers. As tools Davies still had several sailors, including the one whose nose he had bloodied so well, standing near, their backs to him. The crowd was moving off slowly.

Speaking so swiftly that he had finished before the sailors turned, Lew snapped, "That *kurombo,* that nigger, has slapped the beggar-woman!"

Actually, the dark, pockmarked Filipino quisling had done nothing of the sort; he had merely continued strutting along with the geisha following in his perfumed wake. But the sailors, with the poison in their ears, saw him, and the beggar with her scrawny grand-

child, and the Japanese girl. They stared for a moment, and Davies had guessed well the feeling which rose in them.

They did not whisper together. One of them shouted, through lips purple with fury, *"Emo-kushi!* Pockface!" while some of the others repeated the epithet which Davies had put into their heads: *"Kurombo!"*

The sailors began to yell as they ran toward the cowering Filipino. How dare he strike an honorable beggar-grandmother and her grandchild? He was worse than an *Amerika-jin!* He was worse than a *Shina-jin!* He was filth!

A soldier who had joined them cried, "Look how he parades before us with a girl such as none of us can afford!" and this fanned the flames.

Davies, who had heard a little of what had happened when men of the type of the pock-faced Filipino had assisted the Japanese during the first attack on Manila, wished he might stay to watch. Instead, he worked his way, head low, through the crowd, and shuffled quietly in the direction of the railway station, beyond which was the district where he hoped to be engaged as a *hakoya.*

It seemed strange not to have the end of the brawl turned into a beating and harrying of a pariah. It also seemed very fine.

He couldn't whistle, because no Ainu ever whistled, but he hummed inaudibly as he shuffled along.

"I reclined on a divan of lager-beer foam,
With a pillow of froth for my head,
While spray from a fountain of sparkling gin-fizz
Descended like dew on my bed."

Where were the fellows with whom he had sung that song now? Dead? Prisoners? If not, where they were flying?

Lieutenant Davies had been in a fighter command. P-40's. What would it be like to fly a ship like the twin-tailed American fighters about which the Japanese were so dazedly moaning? What sort of ship was it, anyhow? Gossip, which a *geta*-mender or food-vendor was bound to hear, had it that the airplane which had two tails instead of one was like lightning in the sky, and that it was *seppuku,* hara-kiri for a Zero to attempt to meet it unless the odds were ten to one.

How long would it be before such fighters, escorting formations of bombers, would be over Tokyo?

Davies, passing the station and walking along the street near the small river called San-jukken-bori—a dark street lined with fashionably-built houses with gates and ornamented doors—grinned wryly as he compared what he was about to attempt to do with what was being done by flyers, pilots, bombardiers. Yet if he were able to drop one small bomb of rumor so that it would explode and spread like fire, all of the degradation of his position as a *hakoya* would be worth while.

"Even so, it's a hell of a way to fight a war," Davies muttered. Then he added, "Will you quit feeling sorry for yourself, you lug?"

Speaking swiftly, Davies cried, "The kurombo *slapped the beggar-woman!"*

CHAPTER II

A DANGEROUS STORY

THERE were dimly-lit lamps on many of the gates. These places were *machiai,* waiting-houses. They were not restaurants, although food was served in the handsome private rooms; nor did geisha live there. Instead, Japanese girls were engaged to attend parties at the *machiai,* parties far more lively and informal than those given by wealthy

Japanese in the regular eating establishments. The geisha who came to the waiting-houses to entertain male guests arrived with empty hands, burdened only with their robes. Even the small weight of *samisen* and fan, according to Japanese belief, would have cheated the guests of a little of the girls' freshness and beauty. The carrying of instrument, silken bag and fan, was done by the *hakoya;* and it was the least indecent of his tasks.

The *hakoya* cleaned up after drunks. He accompanied his master when a new girl was being engaged—sometimes, if sufficiently intelligent, playing a part when her price was being argued with the father. He summoned *rikisha* and took the few miserable coins which were extracted from the puller. People scorned him, but if he kept his ears open he heard things told indiscreetly by drunken men. And even if he did not hear them, it would be believed that he did.

Between the *machiai* and the Yoshiwara were the usual stands put up after dusk. Many of them were crowded with uniformed men. Here *sushi* was being bought and eaten—pickled rice mixed with eggs, fish, and vegetables. And as Davies walked carefully past, he glanced enviously at the little square pieces of egg, the white slices of cuttlefish, the bits of lobster.

He was always hungry. For any food.

A steak, thought Lew, after he had passed the food-stands and headed toward the dark side-street by which the Yoshiwara was approached. *A steak. Potatoes. Any kind of potatoes—mashed, baked, French-fried. And coffee. And a real cigarette. Just one. Not,* he thought soberly, *that I'll turn down whatever I get to eat, if I catch on as* hakoya. *Anything, just so it's food.*

The corner was so dark that a decrepit *rikisha*-man said, *"Danna, Oyasuku mairimasho,"* in an attempt to secure a fare, before discovering that the person addressed was an Ainu pariah. After that, he cursed so furiously that he was still choking when Davies turned the corner.

Another *rikisha* approached Davies, drawn slowly and painfully by an ancient Japanese whose skinny, knobby legs were trembling with fatigue. The former sturdy and insolent young pullers were all in the army; only the ailing and aged remained on the streets. And naturally, only similar old men were available as *hakoya.* So Lew, who could guess easily enough how few scruples were possessed by the type of men who managed the places in the Yoshiwara for important families, was reasonably sure that he, although believed to be an Ainu and a pariah, still had an excellent chance of being engaged.

Aside from the lack of men, he would come cheap. In addition, he would be an innovation; he would be something which, with laughter, a shrewd manager could capitalize on, using him as a *taikomochi,* a jester, who could be made to prance about idiotically for the guests' amusement. He would be the butt of every joke, the object of every possible cruelty from manager, other employees, and guests. He knew that. But it, too, was all right.

THERE was the customary entrance to the licensed quarter, through which every visitor and inmate must pass; and there was the customary unpleasant policeman at the broad, carved gate. Through it, as Davies came nearer, could be seen the rows of long houses, with soldiers and sailors and a few civilians examining the girls who sat behind the bamboo-barred show-windows nearest the entrance and trying to decide which girl's tobacco pipe to accept and smoke, which was the sign of selection.

Even before he snatched at Davies' permit, the officer demanded by what right a pariah and an Ainu came to this place of pleasure for men, and ordered him to leave immediately.

"You smell like a dead animal," the policeman shouted, knowing that one of the few occupations allowed pariahs was to work in Tokyo's slaughter-houses. "Go away. The odor about you will be bad for honorable business here."

Davies continued to hold out his permit apologetically.

"You stink," said the policeman. "You stink like an over-ripe dead cow, which is almost as bad as the odor of a dead *Amerika-jin.*"

The man in the tattered jacket did not move.

Snatching the permit and reading it rapidly, the Japanese grunted, "Koropok! What sort of name is that? I do not like it. I do not like the way you stink. Go away. Or do you wish to be arrested?"

'K'r'hodo os'rosh 'katta," mumbled Davies. "Please do not arrest me. I was told that guests within the gates might give me a coin after I related my story, and because I am very hungry I dared to come here—"

"What story can you know?" the policeman sneered.

Davies was prepared. He said, cringing, "I was engaged in cleaning a drain for a noble lord who allowed me to receive four *sen* for the work. He did not wish to engage an Ainu," apologized Davies, "but the drain was clogged and he could not find anyone else. When I had completed my permitted task, the lord asked me if I had ever been an attendant at executions, a task required of us. To this I said yes, because once I was ordered to—"

"What do I care about your drains and executions?" shouted the policeman. "I have more important things to do than listen to your endless nonsense!" Then, blinking, he stared at the groveling Koropok. "Executions?"

"Executions! What executions?" the startled policeman demanded of the groveling Koropok.

he asked. "What executions? Come! Answer me!"

"Of *Amerika-jin* flyers," said Davies.

ACTUALLY, he had not been present; but he had heard sufficient from pariahs at the squalid settlement where he kenneled with them to be able to tell the story. It was one which Tokyo was avid to hear, since the executions of those men in uniform were intended to frighten off future raids.

"You lie," the policeman accused. But he said it doubtfully.

"I was told," said Davies, "that I might be given a few mouthfuls of food in return for the story. And I am hungry." He continued to help the policeman along with what Davies had believed would occur to the Japanese. "I would not expect money. I would not expect payment. I—"

"Payment?" the policeman said. "Payment! Ho! I should hope not!"

The officer, as Davies knew, was well tipped by managers to direct custom to their places. Lew could see, now, how the policeman was weighing the value of the story as entertainment for which guests could be charged; and how the Japanese' cupidity was causing him to lick his lips.

He's figuring out who'll pay him the most, thought Davies.

He could hear a girl's voice, singing as she waited to be called to a *machiai,* coming from one of the side-streets beyond the gate, from a number-one or number-two place, where there was no show-window.

Over the mountains, back to my home;
What shall I bring as a present for baby?
A kettle-drum and a penny whistle?
A doll that jumps up
When you push him down?
Or a wheel that turns in the wind?

"What you suggest," the policeman said suddenly, "is without value. But perhaps it may amuse some important manager to listen to it, and then to kick you out. Therefore you are to go to Number Nineteen, Middle Street, informing the hostess at the guide-house that I, Officer Manabe, have ordered you to be taken to see Suriga-*san.* Now repeat the names for me, Ainu dog."

As Lew did so, in the guttural Ainu tone, he realized that the policeman had decided that Suriga, at Nineteen, would probably pay the most to secure a fool of an Ainu who could be put to use, not only for his story, but in other ways. Strong young men were no longer to be found.

He was told repeatedly how to find Number Nineteen, lest, he knew, he fall into the hands of someone else who would not tip the officer so well.

First, as Davies shuffled into the quarter, there were the show-windows, behind the lattices of which were girls in red and purple who joked and cajoled the sailors and soldiers. Rows of them. Next came long lines of wooden fences on which were framed photographs of the girls who waited in the houses behind the fences. Where the main street turned toward Middle Street and Number Nineteen, groups of uniformed men were gobbling crushed fish, *hampen,* served to them by girls in the stalls.

Number Nineteen, as Davies had hoped and expected, was imposing. The front was of carved and lacquered wood, the roof of tiles. It was the sort of opulent place from which a grafting policeman might propertly anticipate excellent payment for any favor or touting; and it was exactly the sort of place where Davies wanted to be a *hakoya.* Geisha from here

would certainly be of sufficient youth, beauty and training to be sent to *machiai* to entertain important men who would never visit the house itself. It was what Davies wanted. As the *hakoya* of such an establishment, he would be set.

He stopped before the *hikite-chaya*, the guide house, from which guests were taken deeper inside. Because a maid was peeping out, Davies became Koropok for her benefit; he would take a step or two toward the entrance, and then stop and back away as if fearful of entering. He looked up, and then glanced hastily back at his feet in their worn sandals of Ainu make.

The maid, he knew, would report his actions faithfully to the hostess, who, because she had not already come out to order him away, must be busy elsewhere.

It was a full five minutes before the guide-house door was flung open. An officer of Davies' own rank strutted out, followed by the hostess, the maid, the girl who had been assigned to him, and her own assistants. All were calling their thanks for the generous tips. The *taikomochi*, the malformed jester, shrilled in a cracked voice, when he saw the pariah, "Oh, another honorable guest to favor us with his presence! The fame of this place is surely becoming very great!"

While the smiling hostess cursed Davies out of the corner of her mouth, and the powdered girls wished that custom allowed them to take their grateful eyes from the departing figure of the guest, the Japanese lieutenant studied Davies with narrowed, glinting eyes. His judgy brown hand dropped automatically to his holster.

"Would you like to see how a dog is killed?" he asked his audience.

"Yes," urged the deformed *taikomochi* instantly.

The lieutenant said savagely, "It would show you how the *Amerika-jin* die. This dog also will beg for mercy. It is a great sight.

If you draw your gun, you'll shoot, thought Lew, *and my mission will end. But I'll get you first. You'd kill a pariah just to show off.*

"Why do you wait, honorable sir?" deviled the *taikomochi*.

Davies saw the twitching of the lieutenant-guest's fingers. He himself said, in the clipped Ainu dialect, "The honorable policeman named Manabe-*san* commanded me to come to the famous house of Suriga-*san*. Oh, do not kill me for having done as I was ordered! Oh, forgive me for having begged for my life! I—"

A short, fat Japanese was at the doorway; he must have heard his own name, for he demanded, "How does a pariah know my name? What is taking place?"

"The officer-*san*," sneered the *taikomochi*, "was about to shoot the pariah dog, but has changed his mind."

CHAPTER III

A CLEVER FOOL

DAVIES' body tensed; the Japanese lieutenant's gun was half out of its holster. Instinctively, Lew's lips tightened under his beard, and he began to sweat.

"Wait," snapped Suriga, the manager. "Where did you learn my name?" he demanded of the pariah. "And what do you want?"

"Manabe-*san*, the policeman, sent me," whined Koropok. "He—"

"It is I who am the jester," cackled the *taikomochi*, "but now I have a rival! Which girl will the honorable dog prefer?"

The manager ordered his deformed, brightly-clad attendant to be silent. To the lieutenant Suriga said, "These are strange days. Possibly Manabe sent the shaggy animal here to perform some of the tasks for which a man can no longer be hired. That is possible." He turned to Koropok. "Is that it?"

"*Ikitai*," whimpered Koropok. "I am afraid. Let me go away." Then he mumbled, "I was to relate to you—"

"Whatever it is," said Suriga, "it can wait." The shrewd manager had no intention of having the pariah say more where others could hear. Manabe was no fool; he was almost too intelligent to be a policeman. "I will talk to you later. In the meantime, you may enter by a rear door."

"I am not sure he is going anywhere," the lieutenant snapped. "I—"

"Oh, surely you will permit it," pleaded Suriga, almost as servilely as Koropok had spoken. "Oh, please! I would not like to ask the lieutenant for the payment for last week, and for Monday night, and for—"

The Japanese lieutenant strode off, his face flushed and furious. A maid giggled.

The disappointed *taikomochi* shrilled, "Why should he not be killed? Do we ever go to the theater now? No! Are we not entitled to enjoyment? And all we do in these days is entertain generals and colonels and admirals and politicians who have little appreciation of our arts—and he will spoil your trade," threatened the jester, grinning evilly at Suriga.

"How?"

"He stinks like an *Amerika-jin*," said the *taikomochi*.

Even the hostess laughed at such an impossible joke; but Davies, walking to the rear, thought, *I've got to watch you*, taikomochi. He feared the warped shrewdness of the jester. Yes, the little devil would bear watching.

Life in the Yoshiwara began for Lieutenant Davies after Suriga listened to his story and summed up the profit to be made from it. But it was the *taikomochi* Tatsu, the jester, who figured out more for Koropok to do than even

the countless repugnant tasks assigned to the new servant by the manager, tasks in addition to the telling of the supposed eye-witness tale of the flyers' execution.

Tatsu suggested that the Ainu be arrayed to resemble the bears with whom Koropok had lived in the northern mountains—surely Koropok was as shaggy as a bear, but without the animal's courage. Then Tatsu himself would lead the bear by a chain when geisha were engaged at waiting houses, and the bear, as *hakoya,* should carry the tools of the geisha trade, musical instruments, fans, and all the rest.

What the ugly jester wanted, Davies knew, was someone whom he could order about and strike and publicly insult, someone inferior to the *taikomochi.* Also, Tatsu could and would take from the *hakoya* the tips given to him, and keep them for himself. Lew had no objection to either of these things, and he was delighted

that the *taikomochi* had an over-developed sense of smell, and believed he had detected a difference between the newly engaged *hakoya* and the Japanese themselves.

Although such a difference had never been established so far as Davies knew, Lew realized that the *taikomochi's* suspicions, should Koropok's actions ever be questioned, could cause plenty of trouble. Lew made no effort to placate the squat Tatsu; he gave no sign that he knew Tatsu continually watched him.

The one time when this continual surveillance was really bad was when Davies would wake, on the quilt in the corner where he slept, to find the jester squatting on his heels and staring at him. There was always the danger of having spoken in his sleep; and to have remained awake would have shown Tatsu the fear of that very danger.

After ten days of this, there were deep rings under Davies' eyes.

While Koropok cavorted and began to sweat, Tatsu would stare at him and snarl, "You stink like an Amerika-jin!"

at the ease with which he had been made the *hakoya;* but what he did not like was the constant suspiciousness of the warped Tatsu. There was never any way of knowing when the *taikomochi* would pop out, with his shrewd eyes darting about.

Lew was forced to tell himself that it was only the usual suspicion and meanness of the twisted in mind, until one morning when he was scrubbing the woodwork, an old maid-servant came up and frankly sniffed at him, wrinkling her forehead as she did.

She was old and talkative; in her youth she too had been a dancing girl. She said, *"Ichido o me ni kakatta.* When I was young, I had a *seiyo-jin* lover. You do not remind me of him. He was all golden. You are black. Tatsu is a fool."

Davies said nothing. Nor had he done anything which might have aroused Tatsu's suspicions in any way. The one possibility was

It took this long, also, for the *hakoya* to be trained in his double duty. The manager himself taught Davies the proper manner of carrying the geisha implements; Tatsu was the instructor for the bear-dance which Koropok was to perform for those guests eager to pay for additional entertainment.

Tatsu enjoyed his task. Davies' arms and thighs were well marked where the ugly *taikomochi* pinched him. Invariably, when Koropok cavorted and began to sweat, the jester would stare at him and snarl, "You stink like an *Amerika-jin!*"

It became a joke in the house.

WHAT was not a joke to Davies at all was that, in these first ten days, he was never allowed to go outside the licensed quarter. Was he to spend the duration here? He was doing no good, none at all. It would be

better to follow up some of the stories he overheard from men grown rich during the war, stories of how munitions factories and aircraft assembly plants were being moved from the cities because the authorities were beginning to feel the tightening of the ring about the empire.

There was even talk of the growing fortifications in the Philippines, to which the army and navy of Japan might one day decide to "advance nearer Tokyo" from Rabaul and Truk; the Japanese were beginning to alter their original attitude toward the people of the Commonwealth, because the time might soon come when the enmity of the Filipinos would prove dangerous.

Hearing such shreds was interesting to Davies . . . but it was just talk. What was real was that he himself was accomplishing exactly nothing. He had become the fool of a fool. The creature of a jester. A tick's parasite.

To the geisha, he was the least thread in the pattern of their lives. To Suriga, the manager, he was a source of income. To Tatsu . . .

Before long, everything was routine. Guests, sometimes sober, more often already flushed with drink, would enter the guide house, to be led upstairs to the reception room, made enticing with fresh green mats and flowers in the alcove. As soon as the guests were made comfortable on the matting, maids brought little red lacquered stands, and served tea and cakes. Orders were taken for additional food and for saki, and for entertainment.

In a few moments the hostess herself and two maid-servants would appear, the latter bringing the bottles of saki, the cups, the tiny porcelain containers where the liquor would be kept warm. And the hostess would explain the unusual attraction to be found only in this place: Koropok.

The geisha and dancing-maids would enter, followed by the *taikomochi* and, behind him, Koropok the pariah. He would shamble in, dressed in brown rags the color of bearskin. His shaggy hair and beard always started laughter from the guests, who enjoyed pulling at both.

The senior, or most important, guest immediately ordered that a tiny bowl of saki be given to each of the girls. Tatsu also received one, but when a bowl was held up for Koropok, Tatsu would seize it too. Did bears drink saki? Oh, no! Men drank saki. Tatsu, amid laughter, would suck down the liquor noisily, and if Davies were not on guard, would wipe out the last sweet colorless drops from the bowl with a finger and then slyly attempt to thrust the alcohol-moistened, broken-nailed finger into the eye of the "bear" when Davies wasn't looking.

"Pain causes him to dance beautifully," Tatsu would explain; and the hint was always taken by the guests.

After many exchages of bowls between geisha and guests, a singing-girl would take up her *samisen* and the diminutive ten-year-old dancing-girls would posture and sway, with the *taikomochi* hopping up and down wildly between them—while Koropok solemnly waddled around the room, making bear-like noises as he had been taught to do by Tatsu.

At the end, Koropok would go down on all fours. Each of the guests, by this time thoroughly drunk and noisy, had the satisfaction of riding the bear around the room, while the girls clapped their hands and laughed. Once a cavalry captain showed the proper form in riding to an attack, with the shaggy pariah as his steer and the *samisen* as the sword. He used a pocket-knife as the spur.

Davies was well slashed.

BY midnight, *taikomochi* and pariah would be alone, and Tatsu would explain to Koropok the things which had been improperly done.

"*Nani mo g'zarimasenu,*" he would screech. "If you do not do better, we will never be ordered to attend at a waiting-house, where large tips are given by important men. Do not think that Suriga-*san* has not suggested it! You do not growl well. You do not cry out with pain when you are burned by a cigarette. All you can do is eat—eat, and stink like an *Amerika-jin!*"

Once Koropok asked humbly, "Please, honorable master Tatsu, why is my odor like that of the people you call *Amerika-jin?*"

"Because all dogs are brothers," Tatsu snarled at him.

Davies hoped that Tatsu had given him the answer which was truly in the squat Japanese' mind. But there was no way of knowing, nor did the *taikomochi* get over studying the *hakoya* Koropok when Davies slept.

Lew would not have needed to invent stories to repeat in eating-shops outside the Yoshiwara in order to damage civilian morale. Senior officers returned from the southwest Pacific, when sufficiently drunk, dropped words which would have been more damaging than Davies had dared hope. But who heard them? Tatsu the jester, who believed nothing which was said by intoxicated guests. The girls, who did not listen. Koropok the pariah, whom the Japanese considered an animal.

Once or twice the manager had intimated that Koropok might wish to spend a few hours at the pariah village on the outskirts of Tokyo; it was Tatsu who talked this down. Davies would have killed the jester with the greatest of pleasure, because the evil little *taikomochi* was preventing him from carrying out his scheme. But he dared not, unless no suspicion could be pointed toward the *hakoya*. Obviously, it was the *hakoya* who would be suspected,

having been the object of the jester's continuing cruelty.

Even so, shrewd little torturings and broken and uneasy sleep were beginning to wear Davies down. It was becoming more and more difficult to control his temper, to play his part, to cavort around with Japanese officers on his back. Worse than this was being compelled to tell and retell the story of the deaths of the flyers—with fabricated embroiderings of how they begged and cringed—before civilian guests who never tired of hearing it.

Manabe, the policeman, was receiving a coin or so each time payment was made to the house for the dancing-of-the-bear and the telling-of-the-dying-of-the-cowardly-bomber-Americans; Davies knew that no escape was worth considering. And a certain stubbornness made him refuse to give up; he had come here for a calculated reason and he wanted to achieve it.

HIS day began a half hour before the girls were wakened at six. The rooms had to be cleaned before the taper was lit before the god of luck in the hostess' room. Then while the girls yawned over their hairdressing and read letters and told about the amusing events of the previous night, Tatsu saw to it that Koropok performed all of the *taikomochi's* own menial duties. In return, against all custom, Tatsu assisted in the dressing of the geisha, a task which really belonged to the *hakoya.* Later, Koropok carried the bran-bags and seven body-polishing implements when the household went to the bath. There were dancing lessons for the little *oshaku,* and *samisen* instruction given by the older girls to the younger—and Davies' hour of deviling while Tastu corrected all of his "mistakes."

He was being cursed by the jester when Suriga, the manager, trotted jubilantly into the room. In his excitement, the fat Japanese actually patted Koropok on the head. Suriga's eyes were shining, and only the prospect of money had such an effect on the manager of the house.

"It has come," he proclaimed. "Such an honor as this house has never received. Oh, how pleased I am! Oh, how nice it is! Oh, such good fortune!"

Tatsu grunted, "What do you talk about?"

"About tonight," said Suriga, forgetting to chide the jester for his improper questioning of a superior. "About tonight. *Yoroshi!* It is very wonderful. Our house is honored. We," bubbled Suriga, drooling a little, "have been engaged by the *machiai,* Purple Chrysanthemum, and we will serve and entertain—who do you think, Tatsu? Who do you think? Oh, you cannot guess!"

"If I cannot guess," said the jester sourly, "you had better tell me."

Suriga lowered his voice. "Korogi-*san* himself! The man to whom our revered and great Tojo-*san* entrusts most important affairs. Korogi-*san!* And there is to be a large party, Tatsu! Of officials high in the government. The party," Suriga seethed, "is being given in honor of equally important men from the south, from Manila."

"Oh," said Tatsu. He scratched his chin. "Do the *Filipino-jin* stink like the *Amerika-jin?* Like Koropok?"

"Koropok," said Suriga, patting Davies again, "is the real reason we have received the order to attend. Oh, I understand why this is! When there has been much singing and much saki imbibed, Korogi-*san* will rise and he will say, 'Oh, honorable guests from Manila, here you see what happens to inferior peoples whom the Japanese do not like!' In time such peoples become as animals." He patted Koropok again. "I also think that Koropok will relate his tale of the cowardly *Amerika-jin* flyers, after which Korogi-*san* will then say, 'Yes, that is what took place,' and, because Koropok has not the sense to lie, the *Filipino-jin* will believe every word. Let me tell you that it has been cleverly planned!"

"How do you know all this?" muttered Tatsu.

Suriga said, "I have ears. I was told."

"Why is time wasted on these *kurombo,* these niggers?"

Davies himself was wondering the same thing.

"Because these men," said Suriga, boasting because he was able to answer, "are to be important men in case our unconquerable armies should decide to advance slightly nearer Tokyo according to Imperial decisions which may not be questioned." Suriga added, "Some of these men performed a duty to Japan once, when the war began. They may have another duty to perform again. Our great Tojo forgets nothing."

Tatsu blinked, spat into a flower vase, automatically ordered Koropok to wash it, and then stared at the retreating back of the pariah.

When Davies had gone, Tatsu said, "These *kurombo* from Manila have seen many *Amerika-jin.* If I were to suggest something which would cause such applause that you would receive additional payment for our entertainment, would you give me any of it, master? Would you give me half?"

"No," said Suriga instantly. "What is it?"

"A quarter?"

It was finally agreed that the *taikomochi* should receive a twentieth of whatever extra might be paid; and the grin on the jester's face, exposing every buck tooth, was enough to make Davies doubly alert when he returned.

Lew had no way of knowing what had been said and planned, but it involved him, because Suriga ran a hand through Koropok's thick, shaggy hair, and through the pariah's dense,

black beard. The manager was also grinning.

"Excellent," he said. "Excellent, Tatsu!"

Davies thought, *What are they up to?* but was careful not to give the least sign of his growing uneasiness.

He understood why he was to appear in the entertainment for the Filipino traitors. Firstly, as an Ainu, he would be an object lesson of what happened to non-cooperative peoples. Secondly, as a pariah who had supposedly witnessed the deaths of American flyers, his story would impress even quislings who might still recall what flyers of the United States had been like. Thirdly, the Japanese High Command and Tojo wanted to do everything possible to assure Philippine assistance when the day came and MacArthur was sending his men ashore under a canopy of planes . . .

Surigo had patted him, initially, in sheer exuberance. How about the running of the manager's hand through his servant's hair and beard? Was that the same sort of thing? Was it? Or was it something else?

And what could Davies do about it?

CHAPTER IV

THE POISON

NO DAY ever went more damnably fast, nor left Davies more worried. The entire house was excited and busy, with the girls unheeding of the cries of the vendor of *mistumame*, their favorite syrup-drenched cakes of boiled beans. By early evening everything was ready for the walk to the *machiai*. The departure was watched enviously by Middle Street.

First, Suriga, in a *rikisha*. Next, in order of age and service, the geisha, in long sober crepe robes; after them, the little *oshaku*, brightly dressed, with their red brocade *obi* hanging down to their heels. The brilliance of the geisha's costumes beneath the dull robes had to be guessed at. Every girl had come; those who did not perform were to take the places of maid-servants of the *machiai*.

After them hopped Tatsu, grimacing with importance. The jester was in orange and green. He held tightly to the chain which was looped around the bear-*hakoya* Koropok's neck. What was unusual was that Tatsu carried a large cloth-wrapped bundle, instead of having his slave carry it.

Davies, last in the procession, did not believe that Tatsu was carrying the big package out of consideration for him, although Davies' arms were filled. He carried the silken bags which contained the stringed *samisen*, the hourglass shaped *tsuzumi* drums, and the *mai-ogi*, the dancing fans. He was dressed in the furry brown tatters which were his bear-costume.

The Yoshiwara sucked in its breath at the sight of the strange *hakoya*. Lieutenant Davies, known as Koropok, never lifted his head.

What was in the bundle?

If I knew that, thought Lew, as he passed through the gate and into Tokyo proper, *I could at least be prepared for what is coming.* For a fraction of time he considered simulating a stumble and fall, and seizing the bundle, manage to rip the cloth so he could see what was inside. But Tatsu, as if the evilly warped mind were able to anticipate any such a thing, suddenly carried the bundle in front of him instead of under his arm.

In this fashion the procession reached the *machiai* and was admitted.

Suriga bowed to the manager of the waiting-house, and the pair, both in high good spirits, vanished for a few visitor's-bowls of liquor. A maid-servant led the others through a lighted corridor and upstairs to a large room on the

The procession to the machiai *began. First came Suriga, in a* rikisha; *next the geisha; after them,*

second floor, where the party of men, Japanese and Filipinos alike, had been eating and drinking for several hours.

Davies, for all his head was low, saw the highest official present, Korogi, an intimate of Tojo, squatting at a red sandalwood stand, from which a maid of the *machiai* was serving him saki. The minister wore a kimono, but also European-style trousers, which were opened at the waist. His face was highly flushed as he handed the bowl of saki given him by the maid to the leader of the traitors.

In that first moment Davies' heart almost stopped.

The principal quisling, whose legs were sprawled out on the floor, was Felipe; Felipe, a houseboy at the Officers' Club at Manila.

Not for an instant had Davies feared anything like this. True, he had lived in Manila; but he had supposed that any Filipino quisling would be some nasty *politico* despised by his fellow Filipinos as a cheap grafter . . . and Davies, as a flying officer, had never met such men. But Felipe! That was a different story! Why, Felipe had seen him daily . . .

If he recognizes me, thought Lew confusedly, *Tojo will need a new assistant. I can do that much.* Then he told himself, collecting his wits, *I'm the last person a Filipino expects to see in Tokyo. I'm well disguised. All I've got to do is continue to play my part—and what a useless part it has become!*

Tatsu whispered hoarsely, "Stand beside me."

From where Davies stood, he could see out into the dimly lit garden of the waiting-house, where, in autumn, would bloom the purple chrysanthemums which gave the place its name. He could see all of the guests, and how the geisha now went to kneel beside some of them, to serve, while others went to remove their long robes and be ready to sing to the accompaniment of *samisen* and drum.

Tatsu held his bundle tightly under his arm and kept it there while he undid the fastenings of the bags which Koropok had brought—and the entertainment of the evening began. Felipe paid no more attention to Davies, than one incurious half-intoxicated glance as at some strange animal.

The pattern of the night was druggingly familiar to Davies. Hiss of silk against silk, as impassive-faced geisha, white with powder, moved on their knees preliminary to striking a few chords and singing, weirdly, with breaks of silence and wide intervals, the expected songs.

Good evening!
Thank you, sir!
Please give me orders.
That is all I know
Of living,
And of loving.

The throb of the little drums, the snap of dancing-fans being opened and shut by the smaller girls.

But strangely, Tatsu as yet had not joined in the dances.

Saki and more saki. Polite belches from the Japanese; a few snores from some of the Filipinos. Several Japanese singing with the geisha. A Filipino furtively stroking the arm of the girl who was serving him. His face was familiar . . .

Then Tatsu suddenly cried, "Observe me!" which was usual enough; but when he leaped away from Koropok, whose chain jangled down to the floor, Tatsu flung the bundle down ahead of him. "This is an *Amerika-jin!*" he screamed. "It is a white man. It stinks. See! I choke it to death!"

The *taikomochi's* hands throttled the bundle realistically. The chain about Davies' neck began to feel tight.

the little oshaku; *and finally Tatsu, carrying a large bundle and leading Koropok by a chain.*

Then Tatsu whirled and, bundle under his arm again, snatched up the end of the chain. "Dance, beast," he shrieked. "Dance! Dance!"

Davies solemnly raised and lowered his feet. Korogi, behind his sandalwood stand, said sadly, "Once he was a man. His people, the Ainu, refused to cooperate. It is very sorrowful to us. I am glad," he said to Felipe, 'that it is so different with you. Premier Tojo is also glad."

To emphasize the words, to prove that he spoke with the voice of Tojo and Japan, Korogi drew out a fan made of flexible metals, silver on one side, gold on the other. A war-fan. An Imperial war-fan. On the silver side shone a gold sun. The orb of the moon, in silver, was on the gleaming reverse.

Korogi fanned his hot cheeks with it.

What a story to repeat I could get out of this, thought Davies, as he continued to play bear. *If only I could get it started!*

He made himself think of this when the Japanese, at Tatsu's invitation, got on his back one after another. There were shrieks of laughter when the most drunken fell off, and when the "bear" was jabbed with pickle-forks from the stands.

The Filipino traitors had sobered and were aware of what the object lesson meant.

It was a full ten minutes before Tatsu, glancing at the quisling leader, said, "When he becomes hot and sweats, he stinks. Does he smell like an *Amerika-jin?"*

Damn him, worried Lew, *he's directing Felipe's attention to me. And when Felipe listens to my account of the execution of the flyers, he may begin to wonder what is under my beard. He may remember the officer who had to shave twice a day.*

It was something which had to be chanced because there was nothing to be done about it now. Nothing.

KOROGI snapped the fan shut, bowed slightly, and opened it again.

"Perhaps you have heard lies about what took place when American flyers bombed children and hospitals in Tokyo," he said suavely. "However, while we Japanese are far too proud to refute such lies, this Ainu was an attendant at the executions at which the Americans acknowledged their guilt and begged for mercy. He has not sense enough to lie. From him," went on Korogi gently, "you will hear the truth . . . the sort of thing which happens to anyone who is the enemy of Japan."

Korogi's meaning was perfectly clear to the traitors.

Everyone was staring at the "Ainu."

Then Felipe said, in halting Japanese, *"Doko ka mita yo omoimasu.* Somehow that black beard and those broad shoulders remind me—"

"The name permitted me is Koropok," broke in Davies, beginning his story. "I was ordered by my generous masters to attend the executions of cowardly white men who ignored the warnings of the minister of His Imperial Highness and deliberately fouled the sky above sacred Tokyo. These *Amerika-jin* demons . . ."

Only Tatsu was frowning; only Tatsu must be wondering why Koropok began the account, this time, before the order was given. Korogi and the Japanese were smiling. Felipe and his fellow traitors were listening closely.

Davies was able to relate the story so mechanically that he could think while he was speaking. Tatsu, for some reason unclear to Davies, was doubtful about the identity of the pariah; why? Felipe, the ex-houseboy, could identify Koropok as a member of the armed forces of the United States, if the Filipino's memory were properly jogged. Right now, Felipe was uncertain.

Add that together, thought Lew, nearing the end of the cruel story so beloved by the Japanese, *and what happened to the flyers will be sweetness and light as compared to what happens to me.* Worse than even that, Davies knew that it would mean the end of his mission, of an American being in Japan.

Outside, as he spoke, the chrysanthemums swayed under the dim lanterns. Here in the banquet room, the geisha continued exchanging bowls of saki with the guests. At the "honor" end of the room, Korogi, full of food and liquor and the heady feeling of controlling everyone in his sight, fanned himself contentedly.

Not once did Koropok give evidence of his inner disturbance but, *What am I to do?* Lew kept thinking. *What can I do?* Plans, he knew, were useless.

He was sure of only one thing: Tatsu intended somehow to strip him of his disguise: but why, why? There was no patriotism nor fanaticism in the warped jester. Was Tatsu counting on the possible reward? The adulation?

The little devil keeps going back to the old fable that there's a difference in oriental and occidental perspiration, was in Davies' head. That myth had been exploded by European scientists. By Germans, Lew had heard his doctor father remark; by Germans who had conducted a thorough series of tests in Japan.

He was at the end of the story. He and the other pariahs, he was saying, now dragged off the bodies of the cowardly white men . . .

Tatsu, this time, broke in just as he finished, jerking at Koropok's chain as he spoke. "There is one thing more, masters," said the *taiko-mochi.* "Please to wait. The best is last. I will show you, in a moment, the exact dying of an *Amerika-jin.* Oh, you will find it diverting! You will praise me—"

"Hurry, then," said Korogi. "I have a midnight appointment."

Tatsu yanked on the chain; Davies followed the jester out of the room.

The *taikomochi* walked down the corridor. The cloth-wrapped bundle was under his arm, and he seemed to be holding something in the same hand. Davies could not see what this was until the pair were in a small room, when Tatsu turned and faced him. Lew saw then that it was a knife, a long, thin-bladed one.

"I would kill you with it," snarled the ugly jester, "but it is too quick a way for you to die. Korogi will think of something better."

Davies blinked and shuffled his feet.

Tatsu's eyes were bright as obsidian. *He's just about half sane,* realized Davies; and then coldness crept up his legs. Tatsu had ripped open the bundle with the edge of the knife. From it fell the uniform of an American Army officer, a trophy brought to the house by some returned officer-guest. Davies saw the bullet-holes in the blouse.

"I am going to cut your hair, stinking white man," said Tatsu, with the knife held ready. "I am going to cut your beard. Ho! You have not fooled me! Did I not live with the *kwaikofujin* from Germany who knew the truth about sweat, even if the other Germans disagreed with him? Did I not live with him until he took my sister as a wife—and then left her! Did I not listen to you as you slept, and when you cried once, just once in sleep, you cried *"aaaaa"* as if you were choking, and not *"aiiii!"* as we cry. Oh, I heard the despoiler of my sister cry in that manner, when he was lonesome! I—"

Koropok mumbled meekly, *"O ki niia'nu.* I have somehow displeased you, master—I do not understand."

But Davies, as Tatsu gloated, savoring the moment to the full, understood only too well. In a uniform, with the beard hacked off, Felipe would recognize him instantly. Tatsu wanted a supreme vengeance, and would get it when a white man was identified as a spy.

He's got to gloat, thought Davies next. *He's a Jap. He can't help it. And he has everything figured out. He knows just how I'm to be bound, so I can't fight when he cuts my hair. But how does he intend to get me into the uniform? With the threat of the knife? Of course. The Nips think that threatening the Filipinos will keep them in line. They still think that the threat of having killed men who flew bombers will keep more bombers away.*

I've got it, Davies decided.

He stood perfectly quietly while Tatsu sidled up to him, the knife raised. The jester whispered, "I am going to put one little mark on you, dog. I myself wish to see the color of your blood, and hear you cry out—"

Davies smashed him under the stabbing arm. The bear-chain jangled as Lew jumped forward after that one fierce blow; but after that, as Davies' hands closed about the *taikomochi's* neck, there was no sound except the tinkling of a *samisen* and the mournful singing of a girl in the *machiai.* Tatsu died very quietly.

Davies picked up the thin-bladed knife and thrust it through the bearskin Ainu belt which was under his costume. Then, without delay, he shuffled out and back to the banquet room. He stood there, blinking foolishly until someone demanded to know what he wanted.

"*Taikomochi*-master requests aid," he said.

Korogi snapped, "Orders from a jester?"

Dropping to his knees, as if overwhelmed by words from the wielder of the war-fan, Koropok whimpered, "He prepares for a new dance. He asks that he who sits nearest you"—Felipe—"return with me, to give advice. Oh, please, honorable master, if I do not bring him, I will be beaten—"

"Even a jester has someone to whom he can give orders," chuckled Korogi. Turning to Felipe, he asked silkily, "Do you mind?"

"Felipe, recognizing an order, could not mind.

Davies led the way, shuffling along and never turning when Felipe said, "Were you ever in Manila?" in English. He slid back the panel of the room where Tatsu lay and, cold as ice, brought down the knife.

The traitor jerked, constricted; the blow had gone deep and true. But, unlike Tatsu's dying, this time it was a bloody business.

Davies surveyed the bare room briefly. He moved Tatsu's body a little closer to Felipe's and, shivering, stabbed it twice. He rubbed the haft carefully, finally placing the knife near Felipe's hand. All O.K.—or the best he could do.

You've got to be a better actor than ever in your life, boy, Lew said to himself.

THIS time he pushed into the banquet room wildly, mouthing Ainu words, *"Ticksha hok'yak! Bin' cuspo!"* and waving his bare arms.

At first the Japanese and quislings stared at him, as at an animal escaped from a cage, while the girls who had known Koropok as the gentlest of persons now cowered. Davies kept on waving his arms.

"Seize him," said Korogi briefly. "He has tasted saki."

"Oh, no, supreme master! No! I—"

The Ainu's arms were pinned to his side by a half dozen Japanese.

"What is the matter with you?" demanded Korogi, slapping Davies' cheek with the fan.

"Oh, master," moaned Koropok, "your guest accompanied me. Oh, yes. But when he stepped into the room—oh, master, Tatsu shouted at him, and . . ."

"And what?" yelled Korogi. "What?"

"Tatsu shouted, *'Kurombo!* Vile nigger!' And they fight—"

Korogi himself rushed out of the room, followed by Japanese and Filipinos; Koropok stood where he was.

The minutes passed leadenly. What was go-

ing to happen next? The quislings, filled with Japanese propaganda concerning supposed American treatment of Negroes, were not going to like this. Nor would Korogi, Tojo's right hand, like it either. *And if I get the chance,* thought Lew, *I can make you more unhappy. If I'm not killed.*

It was a full five minutes before the men returned. Davies could see how the Filipinos were now in a group. Korogi came squarely up to him, and seized the bear-chain, almost choking Koropok.

"What did you see?" he hissed.

Koropok said, swallowing pain, "Master, they fought."

"Who struck first?"

If I say, the guest—Felipe—he will be less on the spot than if a Japanese not only insulted the Filipinos but also struck the first blow. But I came to the Yoshiwara with a purpose, and that's what I've got to fulfill.

"I do not know," said Koropok. "They fought. I ran."

"Did the guest strike the *taikomochi* when the guest *thought* he heard an insulting word?" asked Korogi slyly. "Was that it?"

"They fought," mumbled Koropok again. "I ran."

Korogi flung the iron chain against Davies' face. Blood began to trickle down Lew's lacerated cheek.

Someone was whispering to the minister, "Could we not announce that the pariah dog killed them both, and execute him?"

"You are as big a fool as he," retorted Korogi. He was searching for an answer to the affair; he found it in typical Japanese fashion. Whirling on the Filipinos, he shouted, "A lesson is to be learned from this. You have observed that a Japanese jester is a better fighter than a Filipino soldier. In the future, never forget our utter superiority!"

Korogi snapped open his war-fan brusquely.

"The entertainment will continue," he announced. "I will order fresh geisha. I desire you to enjoy yourselves further."

Koropok shuffled and scratched his head.

"Go away," cried Korogi. "You have had too much to drink. You saw nothing! Did you see anything, Ainu?"

Koropok lifted his head slightly. He blinked. Then he allowed his mouth to open a little, as if he were smiling.

"Even such an animal has a little intelligence," grunted Korogi. "I do not intend to have him say anything which might be in the least at variance with the Imperial official report."

The *hakoya* Koropok said nothing about the deaths at the *machiai*. But when, with Tatsu gone, he was permitted an hour a day for himself, he wandered out of the Yoshiwara and, when questioned, admitted that he saw personages when engaged in his duty. When pressed for details by the always curious temple sweepers, clerks, and professional beggars who patronized the cheapest food-stands, Koropok would allow them to draw him out, reluctantly.

"I have seen," he would admit, "a great person give the Imperial war-fan to—a geisha. I have seen her dance with it. Yes."

Venom. The subtlest of poisons. More than enough to widen narrow eyes, to make teeth click together. This was utter sacrilege. Oh, it was something to cause patriotic men to wonder about such a leader!

Korogi's forced resignation was handed to Tojo before two weeks had passed. A tremendous amount of face was lost, and the rumblings of it were heard clear down to Manila.

The smoking of a filched cigarette, from the case of a Japanese colonel who had stolen it at Shanghai, was Lew's only possible celebration. It was an American cigarette, the finest Lieutenant Davies had ever smoked.

PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS

By KEITH EDGAR

We blast onto that unballasted stretch at full throttle. . . . I get all set to jump.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. CAMPBELL FARREN

WHEN Bobby Burns made that remark, "Oh, Death, where is thy sting?" he meant me.

I warn you, it is a sad story I am about to relate, so if you can't stand a good cry, you'd better turn to something else.

It all starts when I am down in Windsor on one of my "hard luck" trips. That is, I am on the same run as Crazy McIntosh—the long, lean, ornery, horse-faced old mule! He may be the best hogger on the division, but as any railroad man between St. Louis and Boston will tell you, he is also the meanest, most cantankerous, bad-tempered, sarcastic coot on ten divisions.

How he ever came to have such a sweet little daughter, I can never figure out; but anyway, I am sorta engaged to dark-eyed Peggy. I say "sorta" because Crazy, he don't approve of me very much.

Well, anyway, here we are, getting ready to haul one of the regular hot-shots back to St. Thomas on our return trip, and I, being head-end brakeman, mosey up to the engine.

There is Crazy, in clean overalls, his denim cap on backwards and goggles shoved up on his forehead, gaunt cheek bulging with a hunk of McAndrews Plug ("a strong chew for strong men"), poking among the drivers of old 2458 with a long-spouted oilcan.

Crazy straightens up and sees me. He shifts his quid, expectorates, gives a sort of disappointed grunt and bends over the driverod again.

I ignore him and climb up into the cab, where Dirty Dolan is lovingly polishing the stoker controls, a kinda maternal smile on his stupid, bovine face. 2458 has just been fitted with a stoker—the only freight engine on the division to be so equipped to date—and while Crazy complains that it is ruining Dirty Dolan by not giving him enough work to do, underneath he is very proud of the old teakettle and is just dying to get a chance to really open her up and see what speed she has in her now.

"Where the hell's McIntosh?"

I jump three feet straight up in the air when this is bellowed into my ear. Turning around to paste somebody in the snoot, I see it is white-haired Scotty Leyland, the division superintendent, who has climbed up into the cab from the opposite side.

"How do you do, Mister Leyland," I reply respectfully.

"Damya! Answer me question! Where the hell's McIntosh?"

Just then Crazy swings up into the cab, sees the super and grins sourly.

"Hey, Scotty! What are you doin' down here, hey? Travelin' fer yer health?"

Scotty removes his fedora, runs a hand through his white thatch, claps the hat back on his head again, and wags a long finger under Crazy's nose.

"Listen, McIntosh! I'm pullin' you off the hot-shot and shovin' you on a special, see?"

Crazy grunts noncommittal-like.

"Now, listen!" bellows Scotty. "This special has got to go through in a hurry, see? It's eighty-five cars of munitions and this is the only injun up at this end of the division that'll haul such a long train at any speed, see?"

Crazy expectorates politely and looks interested.

"Now, listen!" hollers the super. "I'm gonna get you out of town ten minutes ahead of the International Limited, see? She's ten minutes late and you can go out of here on her time. When you get to Belle River, she'll be right behind you, so you pull into the hole there and let her go by. By doing that we get you out of town and on your way about half an hour quicker, see?"

"I see," nods Crazy.

Scotty lowers his voice to a roar. "Now, listen, Mac! I know eighty-five cars is a heavy load to try and make speed with, but we can't break the train in two sections for the simple reason we ain't got another injun. I want you should get this train over the division as fast as you can, see? You got a clear track, see?"

Crazy rolls his quid into the other cheek and says sorrowfully, "Now, Scotty, when did I ever let grass grow under me drivers?"

"Hmph!" grunts the super. "I know, I know. But jest the same, *I'm* riding the injun with ya."

Crazy's face turns red, and I expect to hear an awful burst of profanity, but all he does is grin that sarcastic grin of his and turn to Dirty Dolan who is standing there with his mouth open and a dumb look on that stupid pan of his.

"Dolan," says Crazy gravely. "Dolan, me boy. I'll need a little steam."

Dolan looks kinda blank and goes back to polishing his stoker controls.

FEELING kind of unnecessary, I swing down out of the cab and go over to the depot to get our orders and clearance. Jelly-belly Bates, our conductor, is in the dispatcher's office, complaining as usual.

"Some mess, eh, Bub?" says Jelly-belly to me.

"Mess? Why? Why is it a mess, Mister Bates?"

Jelly-belly belches and eases himself into the dispatcher's strongest chair.

"Hell's bells, Bub! We'll never get to the river ahead of the limited, and if we hold her up by just one minute, especially when she is trying to make up time, we'll all be fired, that's what."

"Aw, we'll make it all right," I comforts him. "We got a stoker on the hog."

"Yeah," glooms Jelly-belly. "And we got eighty-five cars, too. You can't run ahead of a passenger with a drag like that."

Well, I get our clearance just as the special comes through the tunnel from Detroit and in no time at all we have our engine hooked on and are waiting for the highball.

Darned if it ain't a long train—over half a mile from caboose to engine. I swing up into the cab and hand Crazy the orders. The super has parked his bottom on my seat, which means that I got to stand up. Dolan is playing with his stoker controls and I see we got a full head of steam.

Crazy looks at his watch, then peers back along the train, cussing under his breath. I look back too, get a flicker of something white waving away back by the caboose and holler, "Highball!"

Crazy stands up, hauls the Johnson bar back into reverse, jerks the whistle cord three times and yanks the throttle.

Old 2458 snorts in a surprised manner and heaves back against the train, piling several car-lengths of slack into it before she stops.

Crazy throws the Johnson bar forward, turns on the sand, pulls the whistle cord twice and eases back on the throttle.

The big hog starts to slide forwards, then the exhaust bellows deep and loud, *Wham! Wham! Wham! Wham!* as we pull the slack ou. of the train and slowly pick up the load.

But it is a heavy train, and she don't want to move. However, just as the engine falters and the drivers start to slip, Crazy yanks the

throttle and pours on the sand. The exhaust thunders a deeper note—*Whump! Whump! Whump! Whump!*—and we are rolling.

Crazy keeps easing the throttle back, a bit at a time, as fast as she will take it, and the hog is barking on a sharper note, *Wham-wham-wham-wham-wham-wham-wham!,* picking up speed, imperceptibly almost, but picking up, nevertheless.

With the throttle full back, he starts hooking the Johnson bar up, a notch at a time, shortening her valve stroke.

By the time we roll through Tecumseh the Johnson bar is back in the company notch, the throttle is at the back of the quadrant, and the engine is panting breathlessly, *Chung-a-chung-a-chung-a-chung-a-chung* in fast staccato rhythm, pitching and swaying as the track slides under us at a pretty good clip.

The trouble is, we aren't going as fast as you might think, because 2458 is a freight hog with smaller drivers than the fast engines, built for pulling a heavy load and not for speed.

But Crazy is just starting.

He digs a time-card out of his pocket, examines it and pulls out his watch. I look over his shoulder and see he is checking the limited's schedule. He replaces his watch, slips the time-card into the order clip on the firebox and squirts his chew at a milepost sliding past.

He bites a fresh hunk off his ratty plug, rolls it into his left cheek, pulls down his goggles, glances once at the steam gauge, grunts, and settles down in his seat.

Then he starts shifting the Johnson bar a little this way and that, experimenting. With every shift, our exhaust sharpens a little.

Standing in the gangway, hanging onto the handrail so's I won't get tossed off the engine by the pitching and rolling she's doing, I glance across the cab. Dirty Dolan is sitting up on his seat, one hand on the stoker control, watching the steam gauge.

Scotty Leyland, parked in front of Dolan on my seat, his Sunday hat jammed down over his eyes, is chewing on a cigar, staring at the track ahead.

Old 2458 is laying back her ears and running like a scared rabbit, dragging that long train after her at a most unseemly clip.

Crazy is leaning out the cab, peering ahead through his goggles, his cud moving slowly up and down in his cheek.

Belle River heaves in sight, and I'm thinking that it is a shame to have to stop now, just when we have really started to roll.

Only Crazy doesn't stop.

We highball through the town just as if the limited isn't coming along right behind us, making up her ten minutes with the fastest engine on the division.

I glance uneasily over at the super, but Scotty just pulls out his watch, studies it, rolls his frayed cigar around his lips and shoves the watch back in his pocket. He don't even look over at Crazy.

I DIG my watch out and see that we are now running exactly on the limited's time. So I cross the bouncing cab to the hogger and holler into his ear over the roar of our stack.

"Where are you going to pull into a siding and let the flyer past?"

Crazy turns and grins at me. "St. Thomas!"

"What?" I yelps. "You can't run a hundred and twenty miles ahead of the International Limited with this drag!"

Crazy gives me a sarcastic leer. "Listen, Bub, has she caught up to us yet?"

I shrug. After all, he's the engineer, not me. But I know he ain't going to take a chance on holding up our number one train with the super riding his engine.

Oh, yeah?

We go through Chatham like a dose of epsom salts.

I look back on the long curve into the town, and away down the line I can see the white plume of the limited's exhaust.

She's coming.

Our hog is going like a scared cat, with Crazy hammering her stack for all she's got.

The drumming thunder of our exhaust, the pounding of the rails and the rolling, pitching, swaying, lurching of the racing engine, straining her heart out to get the train over the road, give me an exuberant feeling of power. I look over at the hogger and wonder if he feels that way, too.

I look at my watch. We're two minutes up on the limited's time. Hell, it can't be true! But it is.

We hit the straight stretch and highball through the town.

Then the train sort of hesitates and seems to drag.

Crazy McIntosh bursts into lurid profanity that turns the air in the cab to purple.

Jelly-belly Bates has got cold feet and thrown the air on us from the rear end.

Swearing something awful, Crazy slams on the air pumps.

Well, it so happens that this class of engine has oversize double air pumps, and in a few seconds I can feel the drag go off the train and we seem to leap ahead once more.

Crazy McIntosh is pumping the air back in as fast as the conductor bleeds it out the rear end, and, our whistle shrieking, we clear Chatham like a shot from a gun.

When the hogger sees that Jelly-belly isn't going to stop him, he grins his sly grin and settles once more to hammering hell out of the old kettle, with both air pumps going full blast and Jelly-belly still vainly trying to stop us with his emergency valve.

For lack of something to do, I get the firerake and go up on the tender to pull some of the coal down to the stoker worm. Then I return to the cab to watch developments.

Dirty Dolan climbs down off his seat, opens the firedoors, and takes a squint at the fire. Then he looks around kinda vaguely and hollers, "Where's me firerake?"

Just as I'm going to tell him I left it in the tender, there is a terrible grinding noise under our feet, then a helluva jolt, and I know it ain't no use.

The firerake has slid down into the stoker worm and jammed it up, smashing the works.

Crazy McIntosh lets out an agonized scream like he's been stabbed with a rusty fork and bounces out of his seat down onto the gangway.

Scotty has also jumped down—just in time to prevent Crazy from bashing my brains out with the coal scoop. Crazy's language is something terrible to hear, and chiefly concerns my desire to marry his daughter and what he thinks about it and me in particular.

In the meantime, Dirty Dolan has grabbed the scoop and is hand-firing the hog.

"Well!" booms the super. "Ye've done it this time, Mac! You've tied up the limited eleven miles from the nearest siding."

"*What!*" screeches Crazy. "Me! *Me?* I wuz doin' fine till this—this—"

Scotty bravely steps in front of him just as he takes a swing at me with the shaker-bar. I wish I am elsewhere. There I am, just trying to be helpful, and you see what happens. I get blamed.

"Mac!" hollers Scotty, "you are in charge of this engine, and therefore responsible. I let you run just as long as you were doing all right, but now—"

"Ho!" screeches Crazy. "I'm in charge of this injun, am I? Then you get the hell back up onto that seat and keep yer———mouth shut!"

The white-haired super looks at the hogger kinda hard, opens his mouth to say something, closes it, shakes his head and climbs up onto the seat without a word.

Then Crazy turns to me, gulps and says, more or less quietly, "Would you mind taking the spare scoop and lending Dolan a hand?"

Me, I grab the spare scoop out of the locker and get to work, swinging left-handed as hard as I can. I don't like the expression on his face.

In the meantime, of course, we have been bowling right along, but the hog is now easing up a bit. And the minute the steam drops a little, the brakes start to take hold because the air pumps slow down, too. Jelly-belly Bates still is hopefully trying to stop us.

Well, with Dirty Dolan swinging right-handed and me swinging left-handed we soon get the pressure up again and Crazy, back at the throttle, is banging her tail as hard as ever.

To ease my back, I straighten up and glance at Scotty: The super is sorrowfully examining his watch and thoughtfully rolling what is left of his cigar around his lips.

I look at my watch and see we are just exactly forty seconds ahead of the limited's time. If she has made up her ten minutes, she must be closing up on us. It worries me.

I GO back to slugging coal again until we hit another curve. Then I go over to the gangway and look back. The first thing that catches my eye away back there is the flyer, about a mile behind us.

The second thing that catches my eye is something white being waved in a long arc from side to side at the back of the caboose.

The conductor, knowing that the rules call for the brakeman and engineer to look back on curves (and the fireman, too, when he is on the inside of the curve) is flagging us down.

Well, there it is.

When Crazy had the air thrown on him, he should have stopped, as the conductor is technically supposed to be in charge of the train.

But that was *his* worry, not mine.

This is *my* responsibility, and I can't ignore it. Comforted by the thought that even if I am going to be fired for smashing the stoker, Crazy is going to be fired, too, for holding up the limited, I swing back into the cab and tap Crazy on the shoulder.

He turns his head and growls, "What the hell do *you* want?"

I don't say nothing—I just point to the rear of the train.

Crazy, he twists around and looks back, swears and pulls his head in again, chewing his quid thoughtfully.

He shoves up his goggles and looks me in the eye.

"I don't see nothin' back there, Bub. Do you see somethin'?"

I open my mouth to tell him, but he prods me in the chest with a gauntleted finger.

"Now, listen, Bub. Are ye sure ye ain't got somethin' in yer eye?"

Me, I do some fast thinking. So he wants me to cover him, does he? Well, here's my chance to get even with the old goat.

But then I think of dark-eyed Peggy. It is a cinch that if I don't help him out, we will never get married. Now, if I play along, he'll at least have to tolerate me. H-m-m-m. . .

"O.K., Mister McIntosh," says I, "there is something in my eye and I can't see very well."

Crazy leers at me, expectorates happily, pulls down his goggles and goes back to driving the old kettle.

I go back to slugging coal.

Crazy is doing a marvelous job with the hog, but try as he can, he don't gain more than a minute on the passenger. We just can't make the steam that the stoker did.

We hit another curve and I take another look back. There is Jelly-belly still flagging us. As far as I can make out, he is waving a hunk of newspaper—a smart thing to do as it has a high visibility against the red boxcars.

I return to my scoop without a word. The sweat is pouring down my back and down my forehead into my eyes, and my arms are aching from wrist to shoulder, but I never let up. Too much is at stake.

Suddenly Crazy pulls his head in and hollers, "Hey, Scotty!"

The super gets down and crosses the cab.

"Well?"

"Listen, Scotty!" shouts Crazy over the strident bellow of our engine. "Listen, Scotty, what about the slow order? Hey?"

Gosh, I'd forgotten about it. Now we *are* sunk.

The section men are putting fresh ballast on about two miles of track near Glencoe, and there is a ten-mile-an-hour slow order for that stretch.

Scotty pulls out his watch, looks at it closely, and scratches his head. He looks at our steam gauge and then back at his watch.

The super shoves the watch back in his pocket and glares at Crazy. "Listen, McIntosh! I am going to catch a little bit of sleep! Don't bother me, see?" Then he crosses the cab and plunks himself down on the seat again and closes his eyes.

Crazy grunts in a satisfied manner, expectorates at a whistle post and yanks the cord happily.

My heart goes down to my boots. Unballasted track is liable to slide under a pounding engine, hence the slow order. If he is going to highball right through, I can see us all pushing up daisies.

Dirty Dolan has not paused in his shoveling. Here, thinks I, is a typical case of a strong back and a weak mind. Gosh, it must be wonderful to be stupid sometimes!

I'm slamming coal into her gut so hard and so steadily that I am dizzy with fatigue. Time ceases to exist. There is nothing but the clash of my shovel against the steel of the firebox door and the rocking and rolling of the engine. It is getting harder for me to keep my feet under me.

Then I hear the whistle *whoop-whoop*. Crazy is acknowledging a signal.

I painfully straighten my back and go to the gangway. We are approaching the slow order and the section foreman is waving us down with a red flag.

Crazy doesn't touch the throttle or the air.

I gulp and look at the track. Directly ahead of us, the new ballast has already been laid, although it isn't tamped down yet.

We blast onto that stretch at full throttle, and I get a hazy impresion of incredulous stares from the section hands as we flash past.

Now we are coming to unballasted track—rails fastened to bare ties resting right on the embankment. I get set to jump.

Crazy slams the throttle shut. I don't jump—yet.

WE coast onto the unballasted rails at about forty miles an hour. I see now what Crazy is thinking. By holding her open till the last second he keeps our speed up, then by shutting off the steam and coasting over

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the track he stops the terrific pounding that a working engine gives the rails.

Well, it *might* work.

I swallow my heart and glance over at Scotty Leyland. The super is holding tight to the side of the cab and he has a strained expression on his face. But his eyes are shut tight.

Well, so far, so good. But we are slowing down.

When the speed has dropped to about thirty miles an hour, Crazy gives her a touch of the throttle, just enough to hold our speed where it is.

My heart drops to my boots again when I feel the drivers start to pound those unballasted rails.

Then I feel the track shift under us, just a little.

My heart stops.

Crazy slams the throttle shut, and we coast again.

My heart starts going once more, but pretty weakly.

Crazy gives her more throttle. Then eases her off. Then more throttle.

Suddenly we are past the unballasted section and Crazy is yanking the throttle back with a dour grin on his ugly face.

Well, we are still right side up—why, I don't know. I wipe the cold sweat from my forehead, manage to pull myself together and pick up the scoop.

Scotty now has his eyes open again and is examining his watch. The two-faced old buzzard!

We have the edge on the limited now because, carrying passengers, she takes no chances but obeys the slow order to the letter.

With Crazy pounding her stack like mad and Dolan and me slugging our hearts out, we heave around the curve onto the long trestle into St. Thomas. The hogger jerks the whistle cord four times, and an alert switchman swings us over onto a side track.

Our tail end trundles into the side track, clearing the main line, a full forty seconds before the limited's coaches flash past, right on the dot.

Crazy McIntosh has hung up an all-time record for a freight run.

When we ease to a stop in the yards, Crazy shoves up his goggles and grins at us victoriously.

The super gets slowly down out of his seat, sighs and says to the hogger, "Mac, that was a wonderful job. Wonderful! We will say no more about it, you understand?"

Crazy just grunts.

Then Scotty Leyland turns to me and scowls furiously.

Oh-oh! Here it comes. Here's where I get the gate for smashing the stoker.

"As for you!" booms the super. "As for you, you——"

"Aw, now, Scotty," interposes Crazy McIntosh. "Take it easy, Scotty. After all, mistakes happen in the best of families, and the gaffer did work like hell to get us in, didn't he?"

I can hardly believe my own ears. Crazy McIntosh sticking up for me? Gosh, the old coot does have a heart after all! Well!

SCOTTY looks at the hogger and his jaw drops open. He don't believe it either. He shakes his head and turns back to me.

"O.K.!" growls the super. "I'm only gonna dock you a week for damage to company property. Satisfied?"

I gulp and nod emphatically. Scotty growls under his breath and swings down out of the cab.

I haven't recovered from the shock yet when there is a holler outside and it is Jelly-belly Bates puffing up to the engine, madder than blazes.

"Hey, Crazy!" he screeches. "Why didn't you stop when I threw the air on ya back at Chatham?"

Crazy leans out the cab window, expectorates calmly and says in a surprised tone, "Did you throw the air on me, Mister Bates? Well, well! I thought we had a break in the air line. I just never thought *you* would throw the air on me, Mister Bates."

Jelly-belly is hopping up and down, he is so mad.

"And you, Bub!" he hollers at me. "Are you blind? Didn't you see me flagging you down? Didn't you?"

Crazy raises his eyebrows and looks at me quizzically. Now I see why he stuck up for me, the foxy old mule.

"Why, no, Mister Bates," I stammer. "I had something in my eye. Were you flagging us down?"

"I'm gonna see the superintendent about this!" screeches Jelly-belly, and he waddles off to the depot.

Crazy snorts gleefully and turns to me, a kindly gleam in his eye. I can almost hear those wedding bells ringing right now. Boy, what a break!

"Bub," says Crazy McIntosh softly, "I never thought you had it in ya. No, sir, I just never did."

"Aw, now, Mister McIntosh," says I magnanimously.

"Lissen, Bub," says Crazy pleasantly. "You got it all fixed in yer mind that yer gonna blackmail me, huh?"

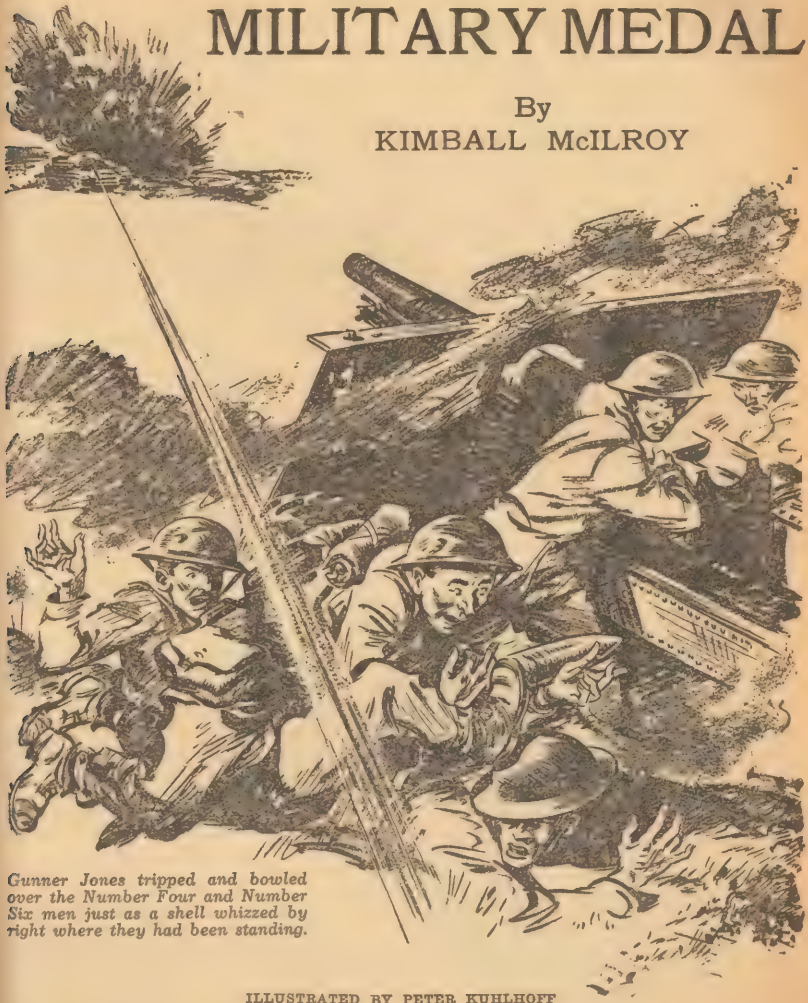
"Huh?" says I.

"And," beams Crazy McIntosh, poking me on the chest with one finger, "if I ever catch you within a hundred yards of my daughter again, I'm gonna slaughter ya with me bare hands—get me?"

There—you see what I mean?

GUNNER JONES and the MILITARY MEDAL

By
KIMBALL McILROY



Gunner Jones tripped and bowled over the Number Four and Number Six men just as a shell whizzed by right where they had been standing.

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

SOME day he'll probably win the Victoria Cross for making a parachute jump without a parachute or charging a machine-gun nest with an unloaded rifle. After the way he won the Military Medal almost anything can happen.

Maybe I'm giving you the idea that Gunner Jones is lacking in some of the qualities that are popularly supposed to be essential to the perfect soldier. If I am, I'm being conservative about it, because in the opinion of most Army people who've had anything to do with him

Gunner Jones lacks these qualities individually and collectively.

Possibly I'm a little bitter about it all because for eleven months I had the singular ill-fortune of having Gunner Jones as Number Five in the gun crew of my twenty-five pounder.

The day that Jones won the Military Medal was just an average day for him. Nothing much happened that would cause any of his fellow gunners to raise their graying eyebrows, except possibly his winning the Military Medal.

We went into action soon after dawn in support of an armored battalion. In other words, tanks. That's always bad news for the gunners because while tanks possess a hard punch and may well break through an enemy line and keep on rolling indefinitely, they also leave something to be desired in the matter of putting up an airtight defense for their supporting arms, who are apt to see as many enemy tanks as their own. When you realize that our troop had Gunner Jones to worry about as well, you will understand why we were inclined to take a somewhat dim view of the immediate future.

We got our first round off a little after six o'clock, putting down a barrage for the first wave of tanks, and after that took on whatever targets the O.P. called back to us. Gunner Jones was busy at his task of pulling ammunition out of the trailer and passing it along to the Number Four, who loaded it. This is a very simple job, requiring little strength and absolutely no brains since a twenty-five pounder shell usually won't go off if you drop it, and Gunner Jones made very few mistakes. It had the added advantage of leaving him pretty well exposed, away from the protection of the gun's shield, and there was always the possibility that an enemy shell might come along.

That morning one did. I have already pointed out that an armored battalion puts up about as solid a front as a Swiss cheese, and so along about the middle of the morning while we were shooting busily away at some distant target, one of the troop spotters suddenly shouted, "Tanks!"

Tanks near your position automatically take precedence over anything else and this one was practically in our laps before we saw it. I said, "Jones, get some A.P. shot," and began to swing the gun while the layer spun the elevating handwheel to bring the muzzle to bear on the tank, which had taken up a hull-down position two hundred yards away and was firing with all its guns.

I might have known that Jones would do something wrong. He got a round of armor-piercing shot from the trailer all right, but as he was bringing it to the gun he tripped over his own feet and fell, bowling over the Number Four and the Number Six. Just as he did it, a shell from the tank's main gun whistled right past where the three of them had been standing.

"Jones, you clumsy fool!" I shouted. "Get up and give us that round."

The Number Four, rubbing his leg, was blazing mad. "If you had twice as many brains you'd be a halfwit, Jones," he said bitterly. "You dropped that damn thing on my ankle."

"They ought to shoot him as a Fifth Columnist," the Number Six muttered, extracting himself from under the breech.

Jones got up and passed us the round of A.P. Naturally, it was too late. One of the other guns had already got the tank. Jones was very much ashamed of himself, as of course he had every right to be. All he said was, "Didn't I hear something go over my head just as I fell down?"

"You sure did," I said with feeling, "and it's too bad you didn't leave your head where it was."

That wasn't strictly true. If the shell had hit him and exploded, it would have meant good-by gun and gun crew, all of us. But a man as clumsy as Jones deserved a bawling out on general principles.

PRETTY soon it became obvious that the enemy tank we'd seen wasn't the only one which had broken through. The situation was not developing favourably. Staff cars carrying worried-looking colonels and brigadiers came by from time to time and no one seemed very happy.

An infantry battalion supporting the tanks had taken up positions on a slight rise a few hundred yards ahead of us, and about noon a D.R. came up on a motorbike with a message for them.

"Send a man forward to that infantry battalion," he said, "and tell them that the colonel says to attack."

Shells were falling in the open ground between us and the infantry and the job looked risky, but I didn't hesitate. I turned to Gunner Jones.

"Jones," I called, "go and tell the infantry out there that the colonel says to attack."

You'd think that nothing could be simpler, that if a man could keep from getting killed on the way he wouldn't have any trouble delivering a message of five words. But if you think that, you don't know Gunner Jones.

He made it across the open ground all right, dodging between the shellbursts and flopping down on his face whenever a machine gun sprayed too close. We saw him climb over the rise and disappear into an infantry dugout.

Since we weren't firing at the moment, we stood around our gun to watch the infantry attack. We watched and we waited and nothing happened. I began to feel a little nervous,

wondering if I should have taken the message myself.

Then suddenly Gunner Jones climbed out of the dugout and started back. With him was an infantry officer. I scratched my head.

As soon as he was close enough to hear me I shouted to Jones, "Why aren't they attacking? Did you tell them to attack?"

The infantry officer—I could see by now that he was a medic—stopped.

"Was this man supposed to bring an order for us to attack?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir," I replied, glancing at Gunner Jones who had become all at once very busy around the gun. "The colonel said for you to attack."

The officer started to swear. "He told us the colonel had *had* an attack," he said. "I was coming back to look after him."

Before we had time to say what we wanted to say to Gunner Jones the D.R. came riding up on his motorbike again, very excited.

"Send another order out to the infantry right away," he shouted. "Tell them the colonel says *not* to attack. The enemy has laid a trap and they'll be wiped out."

The officer looked at me and then he looked at Gunner Jones, and then he turned and walked away without another word. When he had gone I started in on Jones, telling him just what I thought of a man who couldn't even remember a simple message of five words. Of course, it was true that if he had remembered the order the entire infantry battalion would have been dead by now, but that wasn't the point.

And it wasn't for getting that message mixed up that they gave Gunner Jones the Military Medal. He didn't get it for what he did next, either.

The last resort of any gunner is to blow up his own gun. He doesn't do it unless and until there is absolutely no other way out and his gun is in imminent danger of being captured by the enemy. The way it's done is very simple and very effective. You just put one H.E. shell in the muzzle and another in the breech. Then you stand away at a safe distance and yank a rope attached to the firing lever. The result is a gun that's of no use at all to the enemy or to anybody else.

I've never had to destroy a gun of mine but on this particular day it looked for a while as if I'd have to. Our position was well forward and we were having to do a lot of shooting and before long we were just about out of ammunition. I sent word back about it and the reply came that enemy tanks were between us and our wagon lines so that there was no hope either of getting ammunition up to us or of sending our tractors up to pull us out of danger. I told Jones to be sure and keep two rounds of H.E. aside in case we had to blow up the gun.

You'd think that this would be a very simple order for anyone to obey, but then you've never met Gunner Jones.

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THE situation went from bad to worse. Enemy tanks were buzzing around our position like flies and between engaging them with A.P. and regular targets with H.E., our ammunition disappeared like water down a drain. The first thing I knew Gunner Jones was telling me, "Only those two rounds left, Sarge."

I sent him over to the other guns in the troop to try and borrow some, but they were low, too, and couldn't let us have any.

"Well, boys," I said, "there's only one thing left to do. We blow her up."

Those were our orders when there wasn't anything else for it, but that didn't make it any easier. Canadian gunners have a reputation for not losing their guns. But orders are orders.

"Put one of those rounds in the muzzle and the other in the breech, Jones," I said. "The rest of you stand well back."

While Jones was doing what I'd told him, I tied a piece of signal wire to the firing lever and unrolled about fifty yards of it. Jones came running back.

"All ready, Sarge," he said.

I took one last look around on the off chance that help of some sort might be in sight, but it wasn't, so I yanked the wire.

The charge in the breech went off all right, but nothing else happened. We stood staring at the gun, which as far as we could see, was as good as new.

As I stood there a suspicion began to dawn on me and the longer I stood, the firmer the suspicion grew.

"Jones," I said, "what kind of shells did you put in that gun?"

Jones looked uncomfortable. He rubbed the toe of one shoe with the sole of the other like a nervous schoolgirl and refused to look me in the eye.

"Why, I don't just remember, Sarge. So much was going on that I didn't exactly notice."

"Did you put solid A.P. shot in it, Jones?"

"Golly, maybe I did, Sarge."

And that's what he'd done. I never heard of anything to match that for just plain stupidity: trying to blow up a gun with fifty pounds of solid forged steel.

I couldn't bawl him out right then because one of the other gun numbers let out a yell and there was a three-ton lorry full of ammunition that had somehow managed to make its way up to us.

We hadn't time to think of anything then but getting the gun back into action and engaging enemy tanks. Of course, if it hadn't been for Gunner Jones' stupidity we wouldn't have had a gun left to put back into action, but that didn't alter the fact that he'd done something so dumb you wouldn't expect a ten-year-old child to do it.

The first time there was a lull in the firing I told him so, and the rest of the crew had a go at him too, and by the time we were through he couldn't have had much doubt about what we thought of him.

The tactical situation, as they say, deteriorated rapidly, but Gunner Jones outdid it.

The ammunition they'd brought us kept us in the fight for an hour or two more, but finally that was gone. We didn't even have a couple of rounds left over to destroy the gun and there was no more in sight.

That's about the only thing that wasn't in sight, though. We saw more enemy tanks than I'd ever thought existed outside of Herr Goebbel's imagination and they all seemed to entertain a personal dislike for our troop. At four o'clock word came that we were to blow up our guns and get out.

"How are we going to do that with no rounds left to do it with, Sarge?" Gunner Jones asked, scratching his head.

It was the sort of question you might expect Jones to ask and of course no one thought of answering him. We were all busy trying to find an answer ourselves, without much luck.

Then Gunner Jones said, "How about making a bomb with all the spare charges we've got left over? That should do it."

I don't know how he come to have an idea like that. Probably he'd read it somewhere in a book, because he wasn't smart enough to have thought it up himself. Anyhow, we made our bomb.

The twenty-five pounder, like most of the modern guns, has two or three different charges and after you've been shooting for a while there are a lot of little bags lying around that you haven't used. We crammed about twenty of them into an old ammunition box and then added a primer to make it explode. When we were finished we were pretty proud of ourselves. All except Jones.

"Who's going to set it off?" he asked, looking around at us uncertainly.

WE hadn't thought of that. If our bomb was powerful enough to blow up the gun, it was powerful enough to do pretty much the same thing to whomever stayed behind to set it off. We all looked at each other and then we looked at Jones.

"You volunteer for the job, Jones," I said. "You can be a hero."

Jones looked a little doubtful but just as we had expected, he was too dumb to refuse. The rest of us cleared out and hid in a clump of trees fifty yards away to watch. I guess maybe we did feel a little badly about leaving Jones behind, but as the Number Three said, it was

really his own fault. If he hadn't been so stupid when we tried to blow up the gun before, we wouldn't have to be doing it now with a home made bomb.

You'd think that even a man like Jones could be trusted to do a simple thing like setting off a bomb inside a gun, but as I said before, if you do think so, it's because you don't know Gunner Jones.

He fooled around the gun for about fifteen minutes, stooping down and doing this and doing that, and all the while the rest of us fidgeted and wondered when he was going to get it over with.

Then all of a sudden the Number Three said, "Look!"

We looked. A big enemy tank had stopped just a few yards away from the gun and a lot of men got out. We were close enough to see that three of them were high-ranking officers, and from the way they stood there surveying the battlefield and looking pleased with themselves it was pretty plain that they were the enemy commander and some of his staff. Soon they noticed our gun and strolled over to look at it.

"Jones has bungled again," I said, swearing heartily under my breath. "They'll stop him for sure."

But the officers stood looking at the gun and talking to each other and a fool would know that they weren't just standing there watching Jones get ready to blow up the gun and himself and them.

"Just as we might have expected," the Number Three said. "He couldn't even do that right. He's run away."

Just then Gunner Jones came sneaking into the clump of trees where we were hiding, looking scared and ashamed of himself. We didn't even try to conceal what we were thinking of him at that moment.

"I never would have believed the day would come when I'd have a coward in my gun crew," I said, letting him hear the scorn in my voice. "And I was giving you a chance to make up for all the stupid things you've done today and be a hero!"

Jones looked down at his feet. "I'm sorry, Sarge," he said.

I said, "That isn't good enough. You were given a job to do and you didn't do it."

"They got there before I was ready to set her off," Jones said, as if he considered that a good enough explanation. "I wasn't expecting them."

No one bothered to answer that. We just sat there glumly and watched the three enemy officers until they'd finished looking at the gun and gone back to their tank. They began climbing back into it.

I thought I saw a chance for Gunner Jones to redeem himself, and so I said, "Jones, when they get back into the tank you can sneak back and finish the job. If you do, we won't tell anybody how you failed before." That seemed pretty generous to me.

Gunner Jones kept looking at his feet. "I can't do that now, Sarge," he said. "The bomb isn't there any more."

I gaped at him. "Isn't there any more! Well, where the hell is it?"

"In the tank," he said. "I put it there when they were over looking at the gun."

I couldn't speak. I just stood and looked at him. Finally I said, "Do you mean to tell me that the bomb is in that tank, right where they'll drive it away and we never will be able to destroy our gun?"

Jones was ashamed. "That's right," he said. "What took me so long in the first place was fixing it up with a long string so that I could stand way back and fire it. You see, otherwise I'd have blown myself up as well as the gun and naturally I didn't want that to happen. See, I've got the end of the string here."

He showed it to us. We just stared at it. Fifty yards away the enemy tank started up its motors.

I said to Gunner Jones, "You mean all you have to do is pull that string and the bomb will go off? And the bomb is in the tank?"

Jones nodded. "I just have to pull the string and the bomb goes off. Like this."

Then he did and it did and that's how Gunner Jones won the Military Medal.

Inside the twisted framework of the cabin was the charred horror of two human bodies. One was twisted grotesquely, while the other lay slumped against the instruments panel.

A SHIFT IN THE WIND

By H. S. M. KEMP

THERE were bad bush-fires along the Churchill, and for the past few days the north wind had carried a heavy pall of smoke as far south as end-of-steel at Clearwater Landing. Flying conditions were at their worst, with a ceiling that was about down to the ground; yet in defiance of it all, Ed Bromley's battered freight-plane sat low on her floats in the water and swallowed up the pay-load that was being shoved into her.

Bill Chadburn—Corporal Bill Chadburn from the Police detachment at Marten Lake—watched the proceedings with a gloomy eye. He sniffed the smoke-laden air, and noticed that Spruce Island, two miles out in the lake, was barely visible. He gave a grunt of disturbed impatience. Ed Bromley must be nuts to pull out today. A fellow had to work and meet competition, all right, but there should be a limit to the risks he was willing to take. Offhandedly, he mentioned it to Ed Bromley himself.

"Crowding you a bit? The finance-company, I mean?"

Bromley, lean and dark, seemed to understand. He grinned as he tossed away a cigarette

butt. "Not the finance company, but Old Joe Simmonds. If either of his planes were in I wouldn't have got this load."

"Keep going the way you are," grunted the policeman, "and he'll get all the loads."

"Yeah?" Bromley's grin widened. "And me hoping you'd be along this trip!"

The pilot might have said more, but a truck and a taxi drove down to the ramp and he turned to meet them. Bill Chadburn moodily watched him sign for a couple of cartons from the truck and a package from a man who got out of the taxi, and saw him turn them over to Red Ryan, his grease-monkey and one-man ground-crew. Ryan, square-jawed and broken-nosed, was the best of mechanics; but while Ryan could be trusted to keep the plane in shape, he couldn't control weather conditions.

Bill turned to a man sitting on an up-ended gas drum. "How about you, Bert? Going to take a chance on it?"

The man shrugged. He was middle-aged, big-boned and more than a trifle bleary-eyed.

"Guess I got to. I been out six weeks. And that," he confessed, "is just about six weeks too long."

The corporal was inclined to agree. Bert Briggs was a prospector who lived twenty miles south and east of Marten Lake. Bill Chadburn knew that he had come out of the north in the middle of June, and by the look of him he had spent the intervening six weeks in catching up with his drinking. He was now probably broke, which would be the reason for the urgency of his departure.

"Go right ahead, then," invited Bill. "I'll follow when I figure I've a fifty-fifty chance."

The loading of the plane was completed, and Ed Bromley and Bert Briggs climbed aboard. The engine had been ticking over, and now the policeman saw Bromley ease into the pilot's seat and return Red Ryan's all-clear signal. Then with a blast of power and a whirl of spray, the freight-plane headed out across the water.

All too soon the smoke swallowed her up, and the policeman found Red Ryan beside him. The mechanic was staring ahead, a steel tool case in his hand and a brooding frown in his eyes.

"I don't like it," he muttered. "I told Ed—told him I had a hunch. . ."

Bill Chadburn waited for the mechanic to continue. "Hunch about what?" he finally asked.

Ryan blinked. "I was supposed to go along like I generally do, then I got this hunch. Only it was more than a hunch. What d'you call it . . . "

"Premonition?"

"Yeah. Like something was going to happen. So I told Ed."

"Told him something was going to happen?"

Ryan fidgeted. "Well, not outright. Didn't want to rattle the guy. Only I said it was poor for flyin' and we'd best stay home."

"And Ed said?"

"Just laughed. Said I had to stay home anyway to work on the spare engine." Ryan grunted. "But I don't like it. Mebbe I shoulda fixed something so's he couldn't have took off at all."

Bill gave a slow nod. "Maybe you should have." He added, "But it's kind of late to think about that."

The mechanic glanced down to the tool case in his hand. He sighed.

"Yeah; too late now . . . Guess I'd better get on with the job."

CORPORAL Bill Chadburn would have liked to get on with the job himself, though in his case the job meant preserving law and order in the thousand square miles of bush and muskeg surrounding Marten Lake. He had come out on business, and now with business concluded, he was ready to head north again.

But not if it meant flying through soup with Ed Bromley. Ed was a capable pilot, but Bill Chadburn had enjoyed life for forty years and was prepared to enjoy it for forty more. And a good way to begin was to keep one foot on the ground on a day such as this.

Somehow, he found himself worrying more than a little about this trip of Ed's. Bert Briggs had seemed none too enthusiastic about it, and Red Ryan, who by this time should have been pretty well inured to Ed's recklessness, had been downright morbid about it. Perhaps Ryan's forebodings were merely an indication of his Irish fatalism, but the corporal found himself wishing wholeheartedly that Ed had put his trip off for another day.

Then he told himself he was probably glooming over nothing. Ed took fool chances all the time and lived to laugh about them. The best thing to do was to rest in patience, and wait for a shift in the wind and the return of some sort of a plane to town.

So he poked off to the Landing's Mounted Police detachment to kill time with the sergeant in charge, and there ran into a bit of luck. A motor truck was setting out for a fish-camp at the end of Pickerel Lake, eighty miles to the north. The truck road died out at Pickerel Lake, but there he could pick up a man and a canoe to take him the balance of the hundred-odd miles of his journey.

He found the truck driver in a hardware store. An argument was going on between the driver and the proprietor, and Bill was asked to settle it.

"This guy," stated the driver, "trys to tell me a hand-loaded shell is just as good as any other kind. Whaddya say?"

Bill's urge was to get started on the trip, but since he was going to ask a favor, he had to be tactful.

"Me, I dunno," he said. "I never use 'em. Why should I, when I could always get lots of the others?"

"But there's a war on, and rationing," pointed out the hardwareman. "And when I can't get hold of nor sell new shells, I load up used cases. For my best customers, that is."

"Mebbe; but they ain't no good anyway," stated the driver. "The shells," he grinned. "Not nec'sarily the customers!"

"That's what Bert Briggs was trying to tell me," grunted the hardwareman. "Still I gave him a box to take up to Pete Colson, account Pete is out of 'em. .32 Specials. And if they ain't no good, Pete'll sure tell me about it!"

There was a momentary lull in the conversation. Bill turned to the truck driver. "How's chances to bum a ride with you? To Pickerel Lake?"

"Don't feel like flyin', eh?" grinned the man.

"D'you blame me? Anyway, I'll cut in on the gas bill."

"Nuts to the gas bill! The firm pays 'em. And sure you can bum a ride. Glad to have you along."

Bill thanked the driver, fetched a club-bag from the hotel, and left with him within the hour. Then followed a nightmarish all-day ride, but at a little before six in the evening they reached the fish-camp. Here luck was with Bill again, for one of the fishermen, who owned both a canoe and an outboard motor, agreed to start north with him the following day.

Now, well on the road home, Bill Chadburn was glad that he had not waited around town for the smoke to clear. Especially when night came and the smell of it was heavier and more acrid than ever. The moon rose behind the spruce blood-red, and he spared a thought to the foolhardy Ed Bromley.

Ed, he knew, would follow the shoreline of the lakes and rivers all the way and only at a few feet above tree-top level. In time he might come out of the smoke, for his was a long trip—clear through to the new gold-and-copper town of Mica, on the Mackenzie. But what if he got off his course before he did get clear? Yeah, what then? Bromley was a good enough pilot, but he flew by the seat of his pants. Come a sudden rise in the ground, say a hill of a particularly tall stand of timber, and Ed would plow into it before he was aware of its nearness.

Bill sighed. Maybe Ed would be lucky and

They stood watching the plane. "I don't like it," the mechanic muttered. "I told Ed I had a hunch..."

get away with it once more; but he couldn't get away with it forever.

Nor did he feel much differently the next day. The wind still held, and it held again the day after that, so that when he reached Marten Lake he struck off to the Hudson's Bay post on the chance that Old Sandy Henderson had picked up some news.

Asked about it, the Company man nodded. "Yeah. You mean regardin' Ed and Bert Briggs. It come over the radio at supper-time. Since they left town, practically three days ago, nothin's been heard of 'em."

They were in Henderson's stoically-furnished house. Old Sandy offered Bill Chadburn a chair. It looks like you're lucky—passin' up Ed as you did."

The corporal accepted the chair and pulled out a heavy, charred pipe. Ramming tobacco

into the bowl, he nodded thoughtfully. "Perhaps I was." Then he asked, "Would Ed have stopped in here?"

"Not seein' you wasn't aboard. Wouldn't be nothin for him to stop for."

Bill lit his pipe, crumpled the match in his heavy fingers. Henderson said, "Let's try again."

He got up creakily, walked over and switched on the radio. A dozen stations poured in—music, advertising, drivel—but none of those that served the north-country was giving any news at the moment.

"How did they know Ed was missing?" asked Bill.

"First, from the Guv'ment short-wave outfit at Swan Narrows. He had to stop there anyhow," Henderson explained. "And when he never showed up at the Narrows, they contacted all the other points, clear through to Mica. There wasn't no news about the plane from any of 'em."

Bill scrubbed his jaw, stubbled with the growth of three days of travel.

"And this blasted smoke! If it'd lift, planes could get out and scout around." He heaved himself up from his chair and snugged the hat on his head. "Maybe it's nothing, but a guy expects the worst."

Twice that night over his own radio he heard a broadcast concerning the missing plane, but the announcer was asking for information instead of giving it. So the next morning Bill took his motor-rigged canoe and an Indian and struck twenty miles south and east to the camp of Bert Briggs. There was the possibility that Ed and Bert had reached the camp and that Ed had decided to sit down till the smoke blew over.

The north wind that had been holding so steadily, now died a lot. Bill hoped this indicated a change in direction. But in his hope of finding the missing plane at Bert's camp he was disappointed. The cabin was padlocked, and a canoe lay cached in its shade. With the smokeless stovepipe and a squirrel chattering on the sod-and-pole roof, the general atmosphere of the place was one of depression.

Bill, shirt-sleeved, hooked his thumbs in his belt. Moodily he stared around him. The Indian chipped tobacco from a plug. "*Akwa maka?*" he asked.

Bill transferred his attention to the Nitchie. "Yeah, what now? Looks like we're euchered. Only other place is Pete Colson's. And if they haven't got this far, it's a cinch they wouldn't be up there."

The cabin stood on an isolated patch of ground near a string of lakes that ran north and south. As Bill had intimated, Pete Colson's cabin was further north, at the end of the string and seven miles distant.

He sighed. "Well, we've seen all we came to see, so we might's well head back. And we'll boil the kettle on the first portage."

CHAPTER II

IT WAS while they were at dinner that the wind changed. Bill saw little riffles running up the lake, and the smoke of the fire was blowing strongly towards him.

"*Sowunahun!*" he exulted. "South wind! Now the planes'll begin to move!"

But they didn't move at once. The steady wind from the north had carried the smoke a long way. It took another twenty-four hours to shift it. Then a high-wing Stinson banked over Marten Lake village and landed in front of the Police detachment.

Bill knew Art Reese, chief pilot for old Joe Simmonds, and he met him as he came ashore. With Reese was Bromley's mechanic, Ryan.

They shook hands with each other, and Reese said, "Just starting a search for Ed Bromley. This is my territory. Want to come along?"

Bill did, and in a few minutes they had taken off and were climbing in widening circles.

They made three thousand feet, then Reese pulled the ship level and struck westerly across Marten Lake. Above the roar of the engine he told the corporal his plans.

"We figure Ed must have been pretty well on-course to here. He might have got off a bit, but if we zigzag fifteen-twenty miles each side of the lake, we should strike him if he's around."

So they zigged and zagged, but without success. They flew above great muskags, crossed stippled ridges of timber and followed creeks and rivers that were mere silver threads. Sprinkled throughout were crystal-clear lakes.

"If he hit one of them . . . " suggested Art Reese. He shrugged expressively.

They widened their field, flew straight north, then south. They were a good twenty-five miles due east of the village when Bill Chadburn tapped Reese sharply on the shoulder.

"That red patch! See it? There—at the end of that lake!"

Reese saw it, too, a splash of red against gray-and-black. He swung a point to starboard, and when he was over it, wheeled down.

Now, as the altitude lessened, the thing showed more plainly. It had no definite pattern, but it was the same color as Ed Bromley's old ship. And near it was a black patch that thinned out toward the north.

Without speaking, but grim-eyed and tight-lipped, Art Reese glanced at Bill Chadburn.

"That it?" asked Bill.

Reese nodded. "Crash and fire."

They swung on down till the Stinson seemed to be scraping the trees. Now other details came. These were bits of torn and charred

fabric, a crumpled pontoon, and a framework that was a jumble of blackened metal.

Bill, hard-jawed, took in the rest of the picture. The lake was little more than a good-sized pond with a narrow river running through it. Due to the general poor rainfall, the lake had shrunk and left behind a hundred-yard shoreline of bouldery rocks. Ed Bromley had struck the rocks at the inflow of the river. A hundred yards more to the left, and the lake might have saved him.

Suddenly, Art Reese began to climb. He was a clean-shaven, dark chap of thirty. Now little beads of perspiration stood out on his lip. He seemed flannel-tongued when he spoke.

"Can't land here. What'd we better do?"

Bill had a rough knowledge of the country. He looked around him. Save for several small potholes similar to the one they were over, there was no place to come down. True, by careful manipulation, Art Reese might make a landing; but if he did, he'd never get up again. But about seven miles to the southwest was that chain of lakes running north and south. He pointed them out to Art Reese. "How about there?"

Reese frowned. "There? And walk back—six or seven miles?"

"No." Bill indicated the more northerly of the lakes. "We'll land at the trapper's—Pete Colson's. He's got a canoe and engine and can run us in."

Reese nodded. He swung in the general direction of Colson's camp and told Bill to pick it out.

It showed in time, and they landed.

The cabin was of solid logs, and from it a man and half a dozen bellowing huskies advanced to meet them. Pete Colson was dressed in overalls, looked thirty years of age and not overly bright. He clubbed the dogs to silence, and Bill told him of the crash and asked for his help.

Colson stared from one man to the other. "Ed, y'say? Crashed? And near here?"

"Sure," said Bill. "So let's get started."

A big freighter-canoe lay on shore with a motor up-tilted on its stern. Once Colson realized what was required of him, he fetched a couple of paddles, filled the gas tank and said he was ready.

They piled into the canoe, and Bill said, "You know the river that runs north from the second lake down here?"

"The Muskeg River?"

"Guess so. Well, go up her till you come to another little lake. Almost dry."

"Otter Lake." Colson nodded. "I know 'er."

"O.K., then; get going."

The Muskeg River was narrow and winding, so that Bill Chadburn, who took the bow, had to swing a quick paddle at times. But they reached the crash in something over an hour, got out and dragged the canoe up onto the rocks.

They walked forward slowly, appalled by what they saw. The battered old freight-plane was now so much blackened and twisted junk. The red splash they had seen from the air lay a good fifty feet to the north, and though dusted heavily with ashes, was unburned and recognizable as a fragment of a wing. But it was the plane itself that claimed their attention.

They circled it in silence, till at last Art Reese spoke.

"He came in that way, from the south. See those poplars all busted at the top? And he came in pretty flat. Only rolled over once."

Bill Chadburn suddenly heaved the twisted framework of a wing and struggled to what had been the doorway of the cabin. Inside was the charred horror of two human bodies. One was twisted grotesquely, while the other lay slumped against the instrument panel.

The corporal's jaw was hard. "No time to be squeamish, boys. We've got to get 'em out."

It meant bending more framework, but at last they were able to clear a space big enough to release the bodies. As they lay on the rocks, the corporal checked them over.

"This'll be Ed, because he was in the pilot's seat and under the wheel. And that'll be Bert, by what's left of his prospector's boots." He made another observation. "Ed's legs are broken and his chest's caved in; Bert took it all on his head." He stood up, spat in distaste and rubbed his hands.

The others said nothing. Art Reese showed the strain of it. His face was gray and his thoughts were his own. Colson stared at the bodies with stupid concentration. Red Ryan ran a tongue along his lips. The mechanic said thickly, "I never figured it'd be that bad—when he started out. . ."

Bill Chadburn suddenly became brisk. "It won't be nice, but we've got to get 'em down to the canoe. You, Pete, lend a hand!"

THEY were back in the village again, and in Bill's whitewashed detachment. Old Sandy Henderson had joined them. With his melancholy load, Art Reese would soon be taking off for the south. Red Ryan, of course, would be going along.

The corporal made coffee. "If you don't want to eat, you need a drink." He filled their cups, set them on the table with a can of milk and a bowl of sugar. "And have a cigarette."

Art Reese took a cigarette and tapped it against his thumbnail. The discovery of the plane had been a shock to him, and one from which he had not yet recovered.

"They say I'm too cautious, won't fly if conditions aren't good. Well, maybe it pays. Ed thought he could beat the rap—this time

by following landmarks. But the landmarks weren't there. He missed Bert's place by six miles and flew right past it."

"But what made him crash?" asked Bill. "Engine trouble?"

"The engine was all right," put in Red Ryan. "Anyway, it was when he left the Landing."

"He was lost," said Art Reese, flatly. "Lost, and knew he was. So he came down. But he couldn't see that the lake was half-dry till it was too late to do anything about it."

The corporal gave a grunt. Then, to get Reese's mind away from this aspect of the tragedy, he mentioned the matter of Ed Bromley's load.

"Quite a loss there. Wonder who'll get stuck the heaviest?"

"Yeah, I wonder," agreed Reese. "Not the bank, because the currency was insured."

"The currency?" Bill Chadburn frowned. "What currency are you talking about?"

"The fifteen thousand for the bank at Mica. Bank of Commerce, isn't it?"

"Never knew there was a bank up there!"

"There would have to be in a mining town of two thousand people."

"And Ed was flying this money in?"

"Certainly. What's wrong with that?" Reese gave his first faint smile. "Banks receive money, y'know. It happens all the time."

"But for Ed to be flying it . . . "

Bill suddenly had a recollection. And a remembrance. That chap who had got out of the taxi just before Ed took off.

"Sure," said Bill. "The accountant from the Clearwater Landing branch. Knew I'd seen the guy somewhere. He brought a package down to Ed. And," turning to Red Ryan, "Ed gave it to you."

Ryan nodded. "I know. And I set it in Ed's chair—right where he couldn't miss it."

"Who's worrying?" suggested Art Reese, a trifle wearily. "It's gone, anyway. And it'd take a good many fifteen thousands to square a guy like Ed."

They said little more till the coffee was finished, then, going down to the plane, Reese remarked that he'd probably be coming in again the next day.

"Freight's pretty well piled up on us. I'll have four trips for Sandy himself."

Bill Chadburn recalled something he had said to Ed Bromley back at the Landing. The words now sounded tragically prophetic. "Keep on the way you're going, and Old Joe'll get all the loads."

Well, it looked as though Old Joe had.

Word of the crash must have traveled, for a dozen or so natives were hanging around the plane, awaiting the take-off. They glanced awkwardly at Art Reese and Red Ryan and, somewhat hopefully, at Bill Chadburn. But Bill said nothing, and once the plane was headed south, he went back to his detachment.

The trouble was Bill Chadburn was first-and-last a cop, and the sudden injection of a wad of currency into a fatal air-crash had provoked all his police instincts. So he hung his Stetson on the wall-rack and slumped into a dilapidated armchair.

He tried to tell himself that there was no need for worrying at all. The crash, though bad, wasn't the first in flying history, and Art Reese's conjecture as to how it had happened should satisfy anyone. On the other hand, he was paid to be suspicious; so he knew he'd have to sniff around the hole of his suspicions, dig into it, and see if anything came out.

But he had no real suspicions; at least, no tangible ones. There had been a crash, and the plane involved had been carrying important money. That any connection existed between the two would be purely supposition. Yet the connection could well be there, and he allowed his mind to dwell on it.

But fifteen minutes of this showed him what he was up against. If he chose to disregard the obvious and sell himself the idea that the crash had been engineered, could he sell the idea to anyone else? He knew he couldn't; anyway, not without proof. And any proof there might have been had perished in the fire.

Bill spared a thought to the inquest, but the thought was a sour one. Mugs that made up a jury only saw what they wanted to see and rendered comfortable verdicts. Nor could he expect much from a post-mortem on the plane. An inspector would paw over the wreckage, look wise, and charge it up to pilot's error. And in the meantime, if Bill's half-baked suspicions amounted to anything, some long-headed bird would get away with murder. Yeah, murder—and fifteen thousand in cash.

"Pass!" said Bill, emphatically, and washed his hands of it. "She's not my baby, anyway. She belongs to the Clearwater boys."

He felt suddenly hungry, and knew he was dirty and needed a shave. Well, he'd clean up first and eat afterwards. And when these chores were done, he could start in on a flock of reports. Art would fly them to town, and what happened thereafter would be up to the O.C.

CHAPTER III

IT WAS well he wrote his reports when he did, for Reese landed in with a load for Sandy Henderson at ten the following morning. And once again Red Ryan was flying with him.

Bill looked at the red-head speculatively. He couldn't figure why Ryan had chosen to come along. Unless it was to keep in touch

with things as they happened. But Art Reese seemed to explain it.

"Red's working with us now. And there's nothing like making a mechanic fly on the ship he services. Sort of guarantees the job."

Reese's depression of the day before had passed. The corporal was glad of it, for he had a suggestion to offer.

"I've got to pack Bert Briggs' stuff and haul it out. How'd you like to fly me there and save me four portages?"

Reese said it would be all right with him, so with the ship unloaded, the three climbed aboard. Bill again took the rear chair, and in ten minutes they made the twenty-mile hop.

"Wonderful thing, planes," remarked Bill as they landed. "That would have taken me half a day."

The padlock on Bert Briggs' cabin was more a symbol than anything else, for the hasp was secured to the doorframe by four common box-nails. And once he had pried these loose, the policeman wondered why Briggs went to the trouble of locking the place at all. For its interior was musty, dirty and altogether cheerless-looking. The furnishings seemed to consist of a rough pole bunk, a box nailed to the wall to serve as a cupboard, a homemade table and a haywired chair. But there was a shotgun and a rifle in a corner, and a grub-supply that consisted mainly of beans, tea, a mouldy piece of bacon and a can of flour. Art Reese was stirred by the sight of it.

"What the devil did the guy live on?"

Bill shrugged. "Off the country, I guess—in season and out. And any money he took to town for a grubstake went in liquor."

But there were a few articles of clothing and a rabbit-skin robe. Bill found a well-used packsack under the bunk, and into this he began to ram the dead man's effects.

"And you, Red," he told Ryan, "look around outside. There's a warehouse or a meat-cache at the back. Should be some junk in there—snowshoes, or some of his prospecting gear."

Alone with Reese, Bill asked the pilot a question. "How come Red got a job with you people? Did he ask for it?"

"No, the boss went after him. Mechanics are scarce these days; must be all in the Air Force. But Red wasn't fussy. Said he could get a job in Montreal any time he wanted it."

"Did, eh? But he took this one."

"Only till the end of the month. Then he's pulling out."

There was a fly-speckled calendar on the wall. Bill studied it.

"Today's the seventh. That'll give him about three weeks."

He returned to his packing, but the pilot caught the note of abstraction is his voice.

"What d'you mean," he asked, "about giving him three weeks?"

Bill studied the red-soled moccasin-rubbers and then regarded the calendar thoughtfully.

"Nothing," said Bill, casually. "Only he seems in a hurry to get away."

The last thing to go into the packsack was a pair of red-soled moccasin-rubbers. On the point of disposing of them, Bill paused. He twisted them over, studied the well-worn tread.

"Wondering if they'll fit you?" joked Reese.

But Bill didn't seem to hear him. He glanced again at the calendar, then slowly put the rubbers in the sack. Just then Ryan returned.

"Nothing out there worth saving," the mechanic reported. "The snowshoes are shot, and so's the rest of the stuff."

Bill nodded. "All right, forget it." He seemed more than usually detached. Then he added, "That water bucket and the kettles. Might's well take 'em along. Some Indian can use 'em." The packsack he handed to Art Reese. "Go ahead. I'll fetch the guns."

They took off, with Briggs' canoe lashed between the struts of the pontoons; but once in the air, the corporal leaned forward and spoke to Reese.

"Swing over to the crash, eh, Art?"

The pilot turned. "Again? Why—going mor-

bid on us?" he asked, grinning at the corporal.

"No. But I'd like one more look."

Clearly Reese did not understand, and Red Ryan seemed puzzled. But after a fractional attempt to read Bill's thoughts, the pilot began to swing. "Just one look?" he suggested.

"One'll do it. Just one turn around."

It was a short flight. Over the crash, Reese banked sharply. Bill studied what he saw, and his face seemed to clear.

"Fine, Art. Now drop down at Pete Colson's."

"Pete Colson's?" Reese demanded. "First it's the crash, now it's Pete's!" He shrugged in mute surrender. "O.K., Corporal Chadburn. Anything to make you happy."

They landed at Colson's camp to be met by the bellowing dogs. But Colson himself wasn't there, nor was his canoe.

"Away some place," remarked the corporal. "Still, we'll get along."

A club disposed of the dogs, and Bill led the way to the cabin.

Unlike Briggs' hangout, the door was merely latched, so they went in. The place was strong with the sweetish scent of animal-bait and comfortably if roughly furnished. After a look around, Bill came out again. He spoke to the others.

"May hold you up a bit, boys, but I won't be longer'n I can help." With that he began to make a tour of the whole place.

He circled the cabin, poked into a small log warehouse, came out and walked down to the shore. His eyes swept the ground, roved over everything. And the frown on his face showed the bafflement he felt.

"Lose something?" suggested Reese innocently.

Bill gave a grunt. "You'd be surprised!"

But he stopped at last. He was midway between plane and cabin when his glance fell on a spade leaning against a side wall. He walked over, picked it up, examined it with minute care.

Sod clung to it, and mixed with the sod was reddish sand. Sod and sand were dry, for they crumbled at his touch. He looked around him to see where the mixture might have come from and was aware that similar reddish sand lay thick on the roof of the warehouse. Apparently the roof had leaked, and Colson had taken time to fix it. Well, perhaps he had; but Bill wanted to see how good a job he'd made.

Spade in hand, he walked to the rear of the warehouse. Art Reese and Red Ryan, prompted by curiosity, followed him. They saw him peer into the hole from where the sand had been dug, then were amazed when he clambered up the butts of the wall-logs and swung himself onto the roof.

But Bill seemed to know what he was doing. Apparently the roof had leaked the worst on the north side, for there Colson had spread the sand most thickly. Bill selected a spot just a trifle more uneven than the rest of the surface and began to grub into it. Two inches down he struck a piece of flattened stovepipe.

But Bill was more interested in what lay beneath. This was something wrapped in a dirty piece of canvas and tied with a moosehide thong. One glance through a ripped-off end, and Bill swung down beside the others.

"Did I say you'd be surprised?" he asked Art Reese. He tore off the canvas and showed a paper-wrapped package on which some of the seals still held. "Money," he said. "The long green. Fifteen thousand bucks."

REESE stared at it. So did Red Ryan. The mechanic exclaimed, "Why, that's the package of dough Ed Bromley give me!"

Bill said, "So what?"

But Art Reese got in a word. "That money was burned up in the crash!"

"Oh?" The corporal faced him. "Then what burned it?"

"Why, the fire, of course! The fire that burned up the plane."

Bill gave a grin. "But there was no fire. At least, not until Pete Colson came along."

Reese stared at him, repeated his words. Then, "What the devil are you driving at, Bill?" he demanded.

"Nothing more than what I'm trying to put across," Bill answered. "Look at it this way—Pete Colson finds the wrecked plane, so he hightails off for Bert Briggs. The two of them go back, and they find this money. Bert's a souse, but he's honest, and won't touch it. So there's a row, and Bert gets killed. Murdered, if you like; and to cover his tracks, Colson chucks him in the plane, drenches the whole thing with gasoline and puts a match to it. See? Simple as rolling off a log."

Art Reese and Red Ryan wore the frown of men out of their depth. Ryan spoke first. "I see it, sure. But how did you dream it up?"

"The money's no dream," pointed out Bill. "And what's wrong with the rest of the picture?"

"Well, the fire," Reese suggested. "How d'you know Colson set it? That it didn't burn at the time of the crash?"

"You got eyes, haven't you, Art? And you saw the crash, twice. The last time not half an hour ago. Ed crashed in a north wind, and if the plane had burned then, the ashes would have been carried south. But the ashes went *north*, from a south wind. Ed crashed a week ago, but the south wind has only been blowing for the past three days.'

Bill waited while his listeners pondered the point. Red Ryan said, "Yeah, I guess you're right."

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

Bill seemed to know what he was doing. He selected a spot on the roof and began to dig.

But Art Reese was looking farther. "Then Bert Briggs wasn't killed in the crash at all. Ed was flying alone."

"Certainly."

Another pause, and Reese went on. "But how do you know it?"

"I know it this way," Bill explained. "Bert was in his shack within the last few days, and having landed there, you can offer no good reason for him to go any further. And how do I know he landed there? Well, I'll tell you. Bert went to town in the middle of June; today's the seventh of August. In his shack you saw that calendar with the leaves for June and July torn off. O.K. If the shack was locked and no one used it, who brought the calendar up to date? You won't suggest that Bert knew he'd be out six weeks and wanted the calendar sitting pretty for the time he came home?"

Art Reese shrugged. "No. I wouldn't suggest that. But if this's all your proof, well, it's a little thin."

"By itself it would be," agreed Bill. "But there's another matter, and one I think Red will back me up in if he remembers how Bert was dressed back in town. When Bert got on the plane he was wearing heavy red-soled moccasin-rubbers, but when we got him out of the wreck he wore high-top prospector boots. Oh, I know," admitted Bill, "they were pretty well charred, but a fool with one eye could tell what they were. So Bert was definitely home to make the change, and the red-soled rubbers I've got in the sack."

Art Reese seemed impressed, but he puzzled the matter over. "Now let's see what you've got. Finding the money proves the plane didn't burn on crashing, and digging the money out of Colson's roof proves the guy's a thief. And if you're sure Bert didn't get on the plane lugging a pair of twelve-inch high tops. . ."

"I'll go good for that one," put in Red Ryan. "He carried nothing."

"Then it looks to me like there's only one thing you're shy in completing the circle," Reese continued. "And that's something to prove that Colson contacted Bert since he got back. I mean, that he saw him alive."

Bill scrubbed his chin again. "Yeah, I should have that. But the circumstantial evidence is pretty strong. Enough, anyway, to warrant pinching the lug for murder."

SCARCELY had Bill placed his bundle aboard the plane when Colson's canoe slid around a point not twenty yards away. Bill noticed that the man was paddling and that his motor was uptilted at the stern.

But he noticed something else. At the twenty-yard distance—which was being rapidly narrowed—Colson was unsmiling, and there was a hint of hostility in his eyes. He came ahead, however, drove his canoe on shore with a strong thrust and got out. But instead of coming up to where the others were standing, he sat back against the bow of the canoe.

"Lookin' for me?" he asked.

Bill walked the few paces towards him. "Sure; only you weren't around."

"I ran outa gas and had to paddle all the way from Sucker Bay."

"Too bad," grunted Bill. "But you won't have to paddle much more. You're flying out with us."

Colson's eyes narrowed. "That so?"

"It is so," Bill retorted emphatically. "Fact is, you're under arrest for murder—the murder of Bert Briggs."

Bill anticipated an explosion. Colson was just dumb enough to be dangerous. But except for a sudden blaze in his eyes and a tightening of the muscles around the jaw, the pronouncement seemed to have no effect on him.

"You crazy?" he sneered. "I never saw Bert Briggs—"

But Bill Chadburn cut in on him. "I might as well warn you not to talk. What you say may be used against you."

"Yeah? I still say I never saw—"

"Aw, shut up!" snapped Bill. "You saw him and you killed him. To come closer, you told him about the wreck of Ed Bromley's plane."

Pete Colson was jarred. He showed it by the blink he gave. But he said, "I don't know no more about the wreck 'n you do."

"And you don't know anything about a package of money that was aboard?"

"Money?" Colson started, then tried to catch himself. "What money you talkin' about?"

"To be explicit," said Bill, "the fifteen thousand dollars I dug out of your warehouse roof."

The sequence of charges had had a progressive effect on Pete Colson, but Bill wasn't expecting so dramatic a climax. Colson made a swift move. He reached backwards and down, under the short bow of the freighter. When he came up he had a rifle in his hand.

Bill was just quick enough. He sprang in, knocked up the barrel as Colson fired. At the same split-instant his right fist crashed thunderously against Colson's jaw. Bill stood over the man, waiting for him to move. But there was no movement at all; Colson was out.

The other two, Art Reese and Red Ryan, seemed numbed. They had heard the beating of the wings of death, and it took them a second or two to function. But Bill was already picking up Colson's rifle and ejecting a shell.

He held it in his fingers, twisting it around. Then he threw another from the magazine and examined it. He gave a tight little smile.

"Pete's been good to me. Remember, Art, saying I had no link to complete the circle—nothing to prove that Pete had met Bert, alive and in the flesh? Well, now I think I have it." He juggled the shell in his hand. "There's a hardwareman back at the Landing who loads shells and he loaded a box for Pete Colson and sent them in by Bert Briggs. Well, this proves Pete got them, and he could only have got them from Briggs. So the hardwareman will identify 'em, and when that's done, Art my boy, it'll complete your vicious circle."

Art Reese nodded. "So it was a sort of lucky shot—the one that just missed you."

"That's what I say," grinned Bill. "Pete's all right; he did me a good turn. It's too bad we've got to hang him."

SALUTE to a NEW STAR

By DOW RICHARDSON

DECORATION BY GORDON GRANT

(November 13, 1942)

This is the tale of the San Francisco,
This is the yarn of a ship for you,
Thrust by her master into a cauldron,
Hurled into fire by her square-jawed crew.

Deep in the night rode the San Francisco,
Arrow-straight into the corridor
Of big battle wagons with the red sun banner—
This was Dan Callaghan's particular war.

Turrets swung wide on the San Francisco,
Plowing with abandon through the long Nip lane,
Hard against a battleship the gallant cruiser
Loosed at stone's throw a steel hurricane.

Terrier and mastiff, the good old story,
David and Goliath, the fine old song,
Up went Dan Callaghan's cruiser cannon,
Slam went the breeches and it didn't take long.

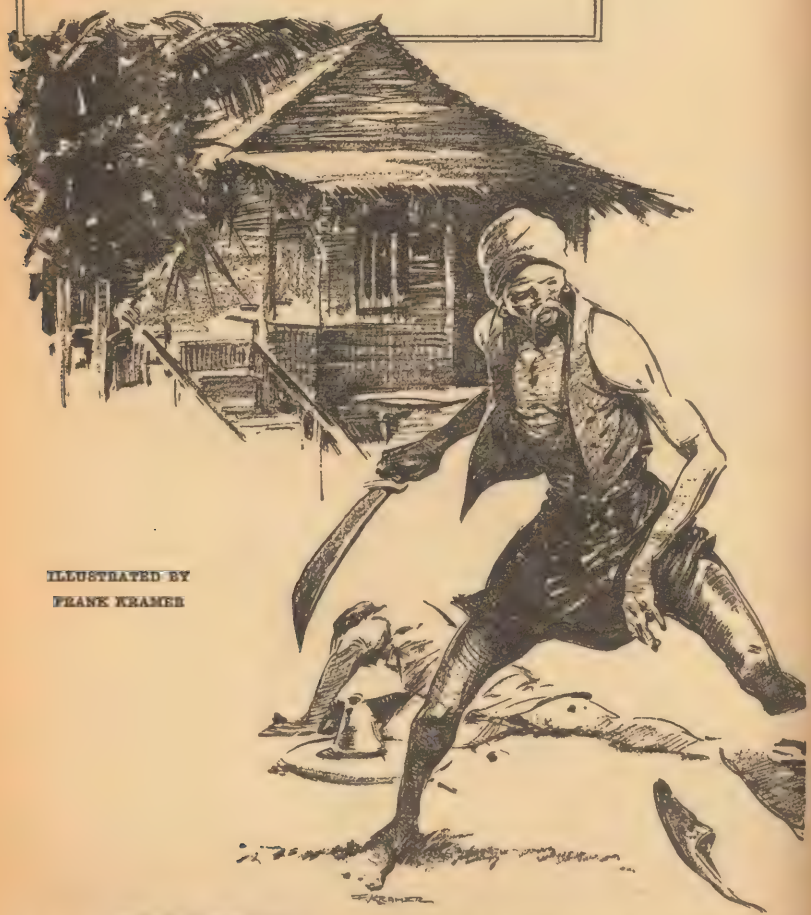
None knew better the risks he was taking,
None knew more of the gambling side,
And the admiral stood on the bridge and coolly
Took his ship in, and there he died.

This is the song of the San Francisco,
I'm speaking short-wave for Valhalla ears,
Where the Monitor *and* Merrimac *and* Bon Homme Richard
Ride at anchor in the long, long years.

Old Ironsides *and the* Bon Homme Richard,
Merrimac *and* Monitor, *ghosts of fame,*
Hear my tale of the San Francisco,
Dip your colors to a bright new name.

SIGN OF FIRE

By E. HOFFMANN PRICE



ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER

THE STORY THUS FAR:

JIM KANE, American surveyor caught in the Philippines by the outbreak of the war; ERIC RYAN, cashiered American officer who has taken four Moro princesses as wives and assumed the titles of general and *datu;* and the American Negro missionary, "BISHOP" JACKSON, are the leaders of a band of Filipino guerrillas harassing the Japs in the Islands. One day a delegation of village notables comes to Ryan's plantation, the guerrillas' headquarters, asking that their raids cease because the civilian population is suffering Jap reprisals. Kane, feeling that morale would be improved if they could know what

was going on in the outside world, decides to go to the Jap-held town of Iloilo, find his friend HONG LI, American-bred Chinese radio repair man, and get material to build a sending and receiving set.

Disguised as a "sunshiner," Island version of the beachcomber, Kane makes his way to Iloilo, taking shelter one night in Rosarito Barrio, one of its suburbs, in the home of the *presidente*, DON HILARIO PUENTE. That night the *barrio* is searched for an American wanted by the Japs and Kane barely escapes. Reaching Iloilo's Chinese quarter, he persuades an old man to take him to Hong Li by giving the "sign of fire," ancient Chinese symbol of distress. Hong Li and his brothers, HONG TIEN and HONG KUA, are acting as hatchet-men for the Society of Heaven and Earth, which has been revived to fight the invaders. They tell Kane that KURODA, commanding general of the islands, is clamping down on Iloilo and that the Japs are searching for an American named SMITH, former power-plant employee, who sabotaged the works and escaped. The Hongs put Kane in "protective custody," locking him up in their house so that he will not be caught in the Jap cordon, while they go out to obtain the radio parts. But when Kane learns that Don Hilario has been arrested and may be executed for sheltering a man presumed to be Smith, he escapes from the house to go to the police and tell them that it was not Smith but himself, a harmless sunshiner, who was hiding at Don Hilario's. On the way there, he is arrested for passing a Jap sentry without bowing. Brought before the Jap police captain for

"Cabrones chinga'os!" *cried Don Hilario, hewing right and left with the broad-bladed bolo. Starting with a limited list, he now saw all people as one; blood blinded him. Panic raced through the* barrio.

questioning, he manages to convince him of his and Don Hilario's innocence but he is put in jail anyway for his insult to the sentry.

PART II

BY MORNING, Kane had no complaint about lying on the stone floor of a damp cell; his aches and bruises kept him from feeling any external discomforts. His feverish sleep was a nightmare of wondering whether Don Hilario would profit by the surrender. Slugging had knocked holes into Kane's logic.

A Filipino turnkey brought him rice and a bit of salt fish. Kane had barely gagged a few bites when the khaki-clad police came and brusquely ordered him to march. They did not boot him, but they displayed neither sympathy nor interest, despite the absence of Jap soldiers. Propaganda and intimidation had convinced the natives that being pro-American was impolite and tactless.

They herded him into the court. A dozen white men squatted on the stones: sunshiners, and the real article. Some wore *chinelas*, some were barefooted. Several were decked out in *camisa de chino* and decrepit pants. One wore a Moro *sarong* and turban. They were filthy, reeking, bleary-eyed; nearly all had betel-blackened teeth. Though guessing ages was futile, Kane made allowances for drink and wear, and judged them to range from forty to sixty.

Punch drunk, gin drunk—some scowling, some chuckling and giggling and muttering. Given scissors, at least one out of four would have been cutting paper dollies.

A squad of soldiers herded another half-dozen sots into the area. A second squad carried a few and dumped them into a corner. Bit by bit, as the morning wore on, Kane got the idea: a roundup of sunshiners, ex-soldiers, ex-planters, ex-copra traders, ex-men. The red-haired youngster of the lot, who showed signs of having put up a vigorous battle, hitched over to Kane and grinned, and said, "Sanitary patrol mopping up. Where the hell you from?"

"Gold sands. Rio Bunga-Bunga."

"Geeze, you must love work! A Chino can't make a living there."

"How come all this roundup?"

Red shrugged. "Inciting *guapas* to sedition, I guess."

Kane wondered how any native woman could prefer these wrecks to an honest barefooted *tao*. Well, they wouldn't, now that American prestige had received such a thorough shellacking!

"Did you have a chance to say, Good morning, Judge?"

Red shook his head. "Naw. Just a roundup." He made a clutching gesture, as of sudden alarm, and tore an infantry collar ornament from his lapel. This he flung over the twelve-foot wall. "Went over the hill five years ago, but the yellow ———s might shoot me for a guerrilla. Lucky they didn't notice it!"

Kane, thinking of his comrades in Mindanao, was on the point of retorting, "Why, you son of ———, who'd ever take you for a guerrilla?" But this was no time to brag.

Around noon, a detachment of soldiers came in to make the prisoners line up. There was a push cart loaded with brooms and rakes. The lieutenant in charge began, "Attention, Americans! To set examper of industry and creanriness, you wirr do street-creaning duty. Attempted escapement wirr be shot without warning."

Each sentry had six prisoners. The sunshiners scattered over town. Since there were not enough tools to go around, half the fatigue detail had to squat and stoop, working with bare hands to pick up the filth which had accumulated since Iloilo, once the cleanest city in the Philippines, had deteriorated under Jap occupation.

Kane and Red were among those using five-fingered implements. A kick or bayonet prod was the sentry's reminder that not one cigarette butt, not one cud of betel was to be overlooked. And there were far too many dogs and ponies circulating in Iloilo.

"We'll be getting dishpan hands pretty soon," Red muttered.

"Yeah, we're climbing down the ladder, dung by dung."

The sun, blasting down on Kane's averted head, burned out his sense of humor. Mid-afternoon in the Visayas is no time for stooping. But the worst of the whole nasty job was seeing, from the corner of the eye, that white women, halting as prescribed to bow to the skibbie guard, saw white men fumbling in the many weeks' accumulation of offal.

Red was durable. "We're lucky," he said, and snagged a snipe flipped by a passing native. "If we were Smith, we'd be shot."

They were far enough ahead of the sentry to risk speech from the corner of the mouth. "What do you know about Smith?"

"Nice guy, gave me these clothes. Told him I was a bobtailed soldier. He said he'd never work for the dirty little *bugaos* and he made good, huh?"

Panay Island and Iloilo Town had not been taken until some time after the fall of Bataan; there had been chance enough for the power company man to express himself to the sunshiner. And Kane, for all his self-promoted grief, had felt that he and Smith had a lot in common. But this was no time for inquiries, so he agreed, "Yeah, plenty."

He owed this jam, indirectly, to Smith. Or did he?

Toward sunset, when the ferocity of the heat

had abated, and the wind shifted landward, Kane had picked butts and manure until he reached the cathedral. He was sweat-drenched and his lips were black. But worst of all, he was boiling inside. Once more, he began to hate Filipinos. This wrath came when a long, gleaming car pulled up, and the native at the wheel made as if to dismount.

The sentry eyed him, gestured, and the pompous little man in the shantung suit and spotless Buntal hat made a gay, careless gesture of acknowledgement. Beside him was an exquisite *mestiza*, green parasol shading her, who had not made the first move toward alighting. A collaborationist and his *guapa*.

Red muttered, "The damn pig ———s! The Jap loving son of a ———!"

The beautiful car roared away with the beautiful girl and her elegant companion. Then, nearing the entrance of the cathedral, where loafers had left a concentration of debris, Kane cheered up.

A little gray-haired man wearing silver spectacles and painfully gleaming shoes, foot-pinching patent leather shoes, came out with an old woman whose red shoes caused equal agony. She was dressed like a carnival parade. Big, magnolia blossom sleeves belled out above the elbow; a misty head scarf; yellow silk gloves, a purple silk dress that crackled and rustled and twinkled in the ruddy light. She tottered on fantastically high heels. She dabbled her eyes with a handkerchief, and she was saying, "Hilario, how good God has been to us! I burn candles to the holy saints every day as long as I live."

Don Hilario Puente and his good wife were returning from giving thanks for his recent liberation.

Kane forgot discipline, he forgot the sentry. He dropped his handful of filth, and straightened up. "Thank God you're free again, Don Hilario! I feel better now!"

The frail little man started as though stung. His wife gasped, "Hilario, the gold, the gold! He told them, he—"

"*'Zus-mario-zep!*" he exclaimed. "*Señor—*"

Then the Jap snarled, booted Kane, knocking him asprawl. He jabbered at the two natives, and they went on.

Red asked, "You know them Gooks?"

"That's a gentleman and a lady, and I'll knock the tar out of you if you so much as think otherwise," Kane retorted, as he set to work.

He felt better. He had not made a silly play. The man was alive, at large, and looking forward. Kane felt the way he had on coming out of his first guerrilla raid, unscratched and victorious. Until now, he had never believed that that emotion could be duplicated. Unless it might be when, swimming to Australia, he found Diane sitting on the beach waiting for him. . . .

THE sunshiners were marched to a barbed wire enclosed stockade, newly constructed, and well out of the limits of Iloilo proper. Their shelters were of bamboo and *nipa* thatch; there was none of the comparative comfort and convenience and privacy which the original internees enjoyed at Fort San Pedro, built by Spain, and for years occupied by United States troops.

According to Japanese standards, the food was good, though the fact that it equaled their enlisted man's ration did not make it something for Brillat-Savarin to write about. The civilized Chinese, between famine years, are epicures; the insular Jap, on the other hand, considering eating as nothing but an essential to existence, took flower arrangements in lieu of tongue-tickling and belly-filling grub.

"I wouldn't feed this damn swill to the *babui*," Red grumbled. "Wait till my *matrimonia* brings us some chow."

It took several days for the sunshiners' native ladies to get organized. The guards were decent enough about admitting supplementary rations, mainly papayas and bananas, a few bits of chicken, and *sisi* which reeked as no oyster should. Kané, having no squaw, would have fared badly but for the prestige he had gained from attempting to beat up a Jap soldier, the moral equivalent of the old-time game of slugging the daylights out of Filipino cops.

He heard his guerrilla self discussed by the sunshiners; his Iloilo name was, "Jonesy, that long-legged son of a ———, with an education."

"Kane is nuts," they declared. "The loco —— can't whip the Jap army. I don't give a happy hoot how good a fighting man a Moro is, it takes more than guts, it takes guns. He's just making it tough for everyone, us and the Gooks too. That's why we're here. The skibbies are getting ——— up their backs, figuring he'll start a riot in town."

This was flattering to think about, when, after Iloilo had been made sanitary, the sunshiners' battalion was set to work on mosquito abatement, draining stagnant pools, dumping crankcase oil on scummy water, and generally going through motions designed to convey two ideas: first, that Americans were the working stiffs under the New Order, and second, that the Mikado's men were all out for better conditions.

Kane did not have Chinese patience. He felt deserted. He did not expect the Hong boys to stage a rescue. He did not expect miracles of any kind. But he did think that someone might at least send him a message. It could be done, for Chinese peddlers were permitted to approach the labor gang and swap cigarettes for lodge emblems, empty wallets with fourteen carat gold monograms, sterling cigarette cases, and all the other little remnants of the white men's former status.

"This ain't bad," said Red. "What the hell —we're eating. Don't be a sorehead."

If the Chinese had a secret order, the Society of Heaven and Earth, why in heaven's name didn't Hong Li at least send a good word wrapped up in the palm-leaf binder of a stick of molasses and coconut candy?

Kane began to consider the hemp plantations, which looked for all the world like banana groves, even to the woody, bitter, beautiful golden fruit which was banana-shaped. He looked out over the *padi* fields, where brown girls, skirts hitched higher than anyone ever wore a loin cloth, paddled in the mud and set out young rice sprouts.

Mosquito abatement, with miles of flooded *padi* fields!

Run for it, and nuts for Hong Li. Let the skibbie ———s shoot! They're near-sighted anyway. Put 'em in a *nipa* shack, give 'em a sawed off shotgun, and they couldn't hit the roof. Heroes, that's what the little sons of ———s were, going out to battle and knowing that the only way they could hit an enemy was to poke him in the guts with a gun muzzle. No wonder their officers packed automatic pistols throwing a slug a shade larger than a .22. When they got close enough to a man to see him, any gun was big enough!

"Red, what d'ye say? I'm getting damn well fed up!"

Red shrugged. "Ain't bad. What the hell? My *matrimonia* is doing the right thing. You're eating, too. Don't be a sorehead."

And this rust-headed youngster was the iron man of the sunshiners.

Kane flared up, "You damn gutless bum, you used to be a soldier! I don't blame a soldier for deserting—"

"Aw, talk like a man! It's going over the hill."

"Deserting in time of peace. But—"

"This is peaceful. Geeze, Jonesy, if you were back home, you'd be selling war bonds! You talk like a recruiting sergeant."

"Look at Saboteur Smith—"

"Yeah, look at the pig ———! That's why we're caged up and working. *Working,* by God!"

So Kane gave it up. A bum is a bum.

Then his malaria reared up, and his teeth chattered until he thought they'd strike sparks. His knees buckled. He could barely lift his feet out of the gummy muck. Whenever he saw a ten-year-old Renault, long and gleaming, whirr past with its load of collaborationists, Jap officers, Chinese merchants who were "politically correct," he said to himself, "Datu Ryan is a damn fool, the Bishop is a damn fool, Haji is a damn fool. So are all the Moros, and so is MacArthur. Why didn't he stay retired and enjoy life in the States?"

When a man can freeze and shiver under the blasting sun of Panay Island, that is a miracle; but when he can burn up so thoroughly that the sun feels cold, it is more than a marvel. Kane spent an hour with one extreme, an hour with the other, and then he was worn out, so worn out that the Jap guards did not bother to boot him or curse him.

That was when he made his resolve: I am getting out of here, I am going to get shot while escaping, it is an old Spanish custom, *ley de fuga.*

But malaria kills a man's resolutions. So he did nothing about it.

CHAPTER V

JURAMENTADO!

THEY were mosquito-abating their way toward the *barrio* where a *carabao* had provided interference for Kane's run for a temporary touchdown.

Rosarito Barrio, *nipa* shacks, and Chinese *tiendas, suali*-walled; papayas and bananas, masking the patches of *mais* and eggplant; dyked squares of rice, and the mud wallows where buffalo cooled off. Don Hilario betrayed, and Don Hilario redeemed: the circle was closing, and Kane felt that it was time to start a new one.

And then he saw that once more he had missed the boat. The sentries were too near for anyone to expect even their poor trigger work to miss. The flat *padi* fields offered no cover, the hills were too far off. Finally, fever had given him rubber legs.

Don Hilario was coming out of his house. Instead of store clothes, he wore a head cloth

and a *sarong* and a red jacket. The villagers were surprised; their attitudes made that clear. The cock-fighting connoisseurs sat up. The women ceased work in their garden plots. In a matter of seconds, the men lounging in the shade and the girls thumping and whacking laundry on flat rocks knew that something was going to happen.

And Kane knew, perhaps before any of them, for he had seen the most primitive of all Malays, the grim little Moro who considered old age as evidence of either one of two things: cowardice or the especial favor of Allah.

"*Juramentado!*" Kane whispered.

That wasn't the word; it is only a Moslem Filipino who takes the fatal oath. He takes it out of fanatic indignation, after brooding on Allah's neglect in letting too many infidels live. He takes it because he had bet the wrong way on too many cock fights. He takes it because his wife has eloped with a better man, or because the woman he wants is given to a luckier man. And he takes it because he has been slighted, or because someone has cast aspersions on his manliness, a reflection which he cannot wipe out by any word, and which he cannot endure until a deed atones. Finally, just because his feelings have been wounded. To go *juramentado* is something like, yet something more than, the Jap's hara-kiri.

Kane, fresh from Moro-land, could see that Don Hilario, a Christian and the descendant of Christians, was going fundamentalist according to the Malay spirit. Don Hilario's fellow villagers knew, and they were worried by the knowledge that hewing down several Jap sentries would be followed by terrible reprisal. yet no one dared approach the white-haired little man, who had laid aside the silver-rimmed spectacles, kicked off the foot-torturing shoes, cast off all that a *presidente* should love and make his pride. When Fate speaks to a man, it is not good to interrupt.

Better round up the kettles and the calico, the fighting cocks and the *babuis*, and run like hell. But fascination froze them.

He walked with a springy stride. He pounced. somewhat like Hong Li going to set his hatchet on a shelf. He had become a cat ready to throw aside nine lives at once.

The Japs were unaware of it all. If they had ever heard of *juramentado*, they only knew that it existed in the hinterland. And a man exonerated could have no grudge.

The villagers, fascinated, got off their haunches. He might do it. The guards were bunched up, and ignoring all but their sweating prisoners. Watch it; better than any cock-fight, better than the thrill of *jueteng* or any other gamble. Four hundred years of Christian teachings went over the side. They were Malays, and they would not miss this killing. The heritage which made Igorot mountaineers charge and massacre an entrenched Jap line at Bataan made these people watch breathlessly.

Kane whispered, "This is it. He'll get 'em! But stay clear—everyone'll look alike to him when he gets going."

"*Juramentado*—you're loco!" Red answered.

Then a yell, a high-pitched cry which brought the Japs about with a jerk. Three natives, who had been coming down the highway from town, had sensed the tension and had halted. And it seemed that Don Hilario, knowing their routine, knowing of their departure and purpose, had been awaiting their return. He darted toward them. A broad-bladed household bolo flickered out from under his jacket.

"*Cabrones chinga'os!*" he cried, and stretched his legs in great bounds, covering space like a kangaroo, rather than a man; he had shed his years and he put all he had into this moment.

This, from their *presidente*, was too much. Their instant of paralysis and surprise robbed them of their chance. He was on them, hewing. One cried, "We couldn't help it—"

The shriveled little man blended with the collaborationists. Hissing steel answered "political correctness"; then there were three houses which no longer had spies.

He had started red-clad; they had arrived in white, and now they lay kicking on the red earth. Panic raced through the *barrio*. He wasn't hunting Japs. He had been sold by his own people and a foreigner had redeemed him. He could not any longer live with himself nor with those who had been his kinsmen.

He wheeled, cutting down a Chinese shopkeeper. Starting with a limited list, he now saw all things and all people as one; blood blinded him. Out of the shrieking scatter of villagers came two who had heavy bamboo poles, and one who carried a bolo. They tried to stop him. They had to try.

His blade glanced from the hard bamboo. He pivoted, ducking a blow. And then he saw the Japs, as if for the first time.

THE yellow bellies began to understand; they'd had the few seconds needed. He was too close to miss. Rifles blazed. The slugs knocked him down. He picked himself up. Another volley. He dropped his bolo the last time he fell. A bayonet pinned him to the road. He was dead before he clawed earth.

And Kane stood there in the ditch. Neither he nor any sunshiner had tried to break. Kane had seen the like in battle, where a fatally wounded Moro, unable to retreat, had turned to hew the enemy, but this was different. He understood why people often remained rooted in the path of a *juramentado* instead of running, why they fumbled when they tried to defend themselves.

The Japs were shaken. They yelled, prodded the prisoners, made them double-time down

the road toward town. Rosarito Barrio was a howling uproar, half decided on mass flight, half standing fast since no invader had been injured.

When the sunshiners were at last allowed to come to a walk, Kane gasped, "The old boy died of a broken heart, or we'd be shy some sentries."

He felt better about the damage guerrillas did. It was no worse than what collaborationists caused their own people.

That evening, in the stockade, Red said to Kane, "We're going to see more of that *juramentado* stuff. Saboteur Smith's sticking around. I saw him on the way back."

"The guy that shot the fuses? Hell, you're dizzy!"

"He's short and dark, the size of a Gugu. He was dressed like one, I know I saw him. Foxy—hanging around Iloilo, instead of heading for the *bondoks*. There's someone he can trust."

And then the *matrimonias* began to arrive, with parcels of food and cigarettes. The Chinese peddlers had ceased calling, since they had gutted the supply of keepsakes which the junior sunshiners had brought with them. Kane was surprised to see one stooped Chinese in a dove gray tunic; he bent under a pinga-pole which bowed from the weight of two baskets of coconut candy. Each piece, about the size of a stick of dynamite, had been moulded in a joint of bamboo; *nipa* leaves, lining the cylinder, kept the mess of molasses gumbo from freezing to the form.

The old man was giving it away.

"What the hell you make of that?" Red demanded.

"Chinese are extravagant with their friends."

"No Chino's been my friend since I run out of O. D. shirts!"

The man was Yung Tsu, the man who had taken him to Hong Li. He bribed the sentries with candy. He was everybody's friend. The Chinese are too realistic to fool with mass charities. Everyone but Kane was puzzled, and his heart was way up and crowding his larynx. Red muttered, "What you got the shakes about?"

It wasn't time for a chill, but Kane blamed malaria. He fumbled with the *nipa* wrappings until he wondered if he could ever get at the candy.

The stuff was rammed home like shotgun wads. Under the first disc, he found a tightly folded square of paper. This was a let-down; he had hoped for hack-saw blades.

But he finally got his chance to read: *Sit tight. Making a service call soon.* The signature was a Chinese character. Kane guessed that it must mean "Hong."

He wanted to tell Red, but he dared not. That afternoon had taught him the evils of talking out of turn. But hours after the other sunshiners were snoring on their straw mats, the same luxury which Jap troops enjoyed, Kane lay awake, waiting for a blow-off.

Wire cutters . . . a hatchet-man sneaking up on a sentry . . . a dash to the sea . . . a fast sailing *prahu* . . . God, what a grand place, the unexplored territory behind Apo, with the Bishop preaching Sundays, and Datu Ryan's four brown queens, and Haji chanting Arabic verse to his *kris*, and Ximenes telling again how he had broken from a prison camp, stolen a skibby plane and machine-gunned a skibby camp.

HEADLIGHTS blazed into the enclosure, drowning the murky yellow of the carbon globes which festooned the barbed wire. An officer with a lot of decorations stamped up. A rifle snapped to the present. The corporal of the guard hurried out of the guardhouse and saluted. Keys jangled.

Silhouetted by the headlights, the officer entered the enclosure. A bell clanged. A whistle shrilled. *"Arr out!"* the sergeant rasped.

A sunshiner mumbled, "Oh, God, night work!"

But it wasn't fatigue call. The officer said in English, as the prisoners began to bow, "Rest! John Jones, one pace front."

Kane stepped forward. A moment was spent in having the noncom of the guard verify the prisoner's identity, then came the march to military headquarters.

He had swallowed the bit of paper with Hong's message, yet this midnight transfer, with an escort of four soldiers and an officer, indicated heavy business. And the guessing was not difficult: Hilario Puente had sheltered Kane, Kane had cleared Puente, and now that the *presidente* had run amuck, the Japs wanted an explanation. The prospects were not any too good, for in spite of dissertations on the Malay mind, the Japs could hardly be convinced that the sequence of events had been purely coincidental.

And for all his forebodings, Kane, when he was marched into the office where he had previously been questioned, saw that he had not even begun to realize how fatally the humiliated *presidente* had put him on the spot.

Captain Yamato was there, but his desk was occupied by a squatty, bullet-headed colonel who did not wear glasses. He had a scrubby mustache, iron gray hair, and a face which was a pattern of uncompromising right angles: mouth, chin, jaw, each stubborn and inflexible. And those biting little eyes had no cheaters to warp them.

Yamato received the lieutenant's report, faced the colonel, and announced formally, "The prisoner is at your order, sir. John Jones, as specified."

KANE met the colonel's glance, eye to eye. There was no refuge and no hope: This was Colonel Higashi, one time commandant of Panay Town's garrison, at the northern part of the island, where Kane's guerrillas, after a long sea voyage, had destroyed a distillery and ambushed a battalion of Japs.

As part of the desperate strategy, Kane and Ximenes, after demonstrations to convince the enemy that regular troops were lurking in the hills, had put on uniforms and had gone down to negotiate surrender. Then, as prearranged, their men had refused to obey the order to lay down arms; and while Higashi, to save face, went to wipe them out regardless of the supposed risk, the guerrillas had liberated Kane, destroyed the distillery and made a getaway.

Despite his uniform and the borrowed stars from Datu Ryan's uniform, Kane's studied lack of cooperation so aroused Higashi's temper that, regardless of the laws of war, he had come within a hair of ordering a firing squad to settle the supposed general.

All this recollection was jammed into the seconds during which Kane faced Higashi.

Though the grim face did not change expression, this *must* be Higashi. The same three service ribbons, the same mannerism of fingering a pen. Finally the man spoke, and it was in that same metallic voice.

"Jones, today's incident is curious. There is too much of you and the late Hilario Puente. What reason, how much mutual understanding?"

That the colonel could pronounce *l* was the final damning detail; this was not a stand-in, it was Higashi in person. Kane felt the sweat pop out all over him. His mouth became dry and his legs promised to buckle. In battle, a man has a chance, and battle is bad enough; this was infinitely worse. He was afraid that his voice would shake, or that he would grope and stutter if he tried to speak.

"Answer questions!" Higashi demanded, with routine harshness.

The effect of shock left Kane as suddenly as it had gripped. His only emotion was stolid indifference. He answered, with an ease which should have amazed him, "You know how he gave me food and quarters."

"Captain Yamato told me. Omit irrelevancies."

"A villager loyal to the New Order thought I was Smith, and—"

"Irrelevant! Confine to running amuck."

"He was too proud to live, after his own people reported him."

"Ha! Pride comes to life when your work detail is at his front door. We think this was attempted gratitude rescue."

"He cut down three of his own people."

Higashi frowned, drummed the desk top, and after a moment, flashed back, "And charged

The Chinese peddler was giving away his candy, Kane saw, and his heart was in his throat as the old man approached.

Imperial guards! Rescue attempt. Inspired by your presence. Name other conspirators."

"There was no conspiracy!" Kane's voice rounded out; his confidence was building up. After all, why would Higashi, months after the Panay raid, see any resemblance between a ragged sunshiner, and the "general" who had escaped?

"One man ran amuck," he went on. "No one followed. One man could not rescue prisoners."

Higashi retorted, "Conspirators failed in agreement to follow him in attack. Tell the truth, is to your benefit. Tell lies, you know what I can do!"

"You can do with me whatever you please."

Higashi snapped to his feet. "The same words! Once before, those same words. In Capiz—*General Kane!*"

Kane had used that same expression of resolute defiance, and beyond any doubt, the words just uttered had had the identical note, the ring, the inflection; so that despite the disguise of grime, ragged clothes, shaggy hair and a beard, Higashi had recognized him.

"I don't know what you mean."

The colonel ignored the remark and continued his intent scrutiny, noting now the resemblance he had thus far missed. He was discounting the effects of exhaustion, the peakedness of undernourishment, the sallowness of malaria; and his conviction was not to be shaken. He seated himself, nodded, went on, "Spy in Capiz, spy now in Iloilo. There was

not ever a Brigadier General Kane in the Philippines, I learned after your escape."

Kane shrugged, and retorted steadily, "This seems to be a matter of mistaken identity."

Higashi smiled. "A military court will accept my testimony."

"That's just what I'm getting at, Colonel. You are confusing me with someone else and condemning me on suspicion."

"Police in Capiz will confirm identification. So will officer who brought you to my headquarters there. Impartial court decides."

This was not a bluff, and Higashi had the laws of war behind him. Had Kane been an officer, commanding irregulars in Capiz Province, he would still be doomed for spying in civilian clothing in Iloilo; not having been an officer, he was damned for guerrilla activities in the north.

"You will receive copy of charges," the colonel went on, "and you are entitled to counsel. Japanese officer or Filipino civilian advocate."

"I appreciate that touch of formality, sir."

Higashi missed the irony, and said, gravely, "Lacking pressure of combat conditions, all forms must be observed. You expected summary execution?"

"Within the hour."

"Unjust reflection on Imperial Japanese Army. I make no promise, Mr. General Kane-Jones self-styled, but leniency is possible for cooperation. This is unofficial statement. Captain Yamato, you witness I say this is not official?"

"I note clearly, sir."

Higashi turned back to Kane. "We know now that alleged troops raiding Capiz were Mindanao men, guerrillas arriving by sea. I notice cessation of hatchet atrocities soon after first record of your arrest in Iloilo. Then this Don Hilario runs amuck to save guerrilla General Kane. What have you planned here? Tell me in time, before there are disturbances, and leniency is possible."

"Colonel Higashi, suppose we wait until I am identified."

"Please note, Captain Yamato, prisoner's attitude is defiant. Take him away for confinement under strict guard."

CHAPTER VI

"MY MEN ARE NOT FOR SALE!"

KANE had a cell to himself. Two soldiers were constantly on watch, one walking post, the other sitting on a bench, waiting for his turn to pace the short beat.

Kane's ration was de luxe. He received fresh clothes, a haircut, and far from being just permitted to shave, he was ordered to. And the mirror showed how he was being damned by kindness: the haggard sunshiner was becoming the solid, rangy guerrilla. But since he was already condemned beyond chance of acquittal, Kane did not refuse the excellent food, nor the quinine they gave him. Higashi, having a clear case, was enjoying the luxury of being super-correct in protecting the prisoner's rights; the propaganda value was good.

Filipino newspapermen were admitted.

As for defense counsel, there was not much choice. No Filipino assigned to the task would be other than pro-Japanese, or else too timid to buck a hopeless case. The whole thing was a farce, so Kane said, "Appoint a Japanese officer."

They appointed Captain Yamato, who brought in the copy of charges. He said, "Mr. General Kane, you know there is little I can do for you, except to demand observance of legal procedure and make plea for leniency. I advise making confession."

"To get a life sentence?"

"Not impossible."

"But why confess? Everyone—including you—says I'm guilty."

Yamato smiled blandly. "Valuable effect on Filipino mind. If you are alive, with capital sentence commuted, guerrilla followers have motive for cooperation. Local sympathizers also."

Kane began to understand the play: the hostage system. Or perhaps a story would be circulated about to the effect that seeing the full futility of resistance, he had come to town to quit, and had come in disguise since he had not trusted the Japanese proclamations of amnesty to all who surrendered.

To wheedle him into a confession and then very lawfully stand him up before a firing squad simply did not add up; they could do that without any quibbling. So Kane went sceptical. "Captain Yamato, I can't make such an important decision at once. I have to think it over."

"You do not trust Imperial justice?"

"Frankly, no. And here's something else. Suppose I am shot because of this mistake of identification, and then General Kane makes a raid. It will be embarrassing to have such a thing happen soon after you've celebrated the end of a dangerous guerrilla."

Yamato offered Kane a cigarette and a light. "Ingenious reasoning," he said, lightly; but for all his blandness, it was plain that he was thinking when he left the cell.

Witnesses from Capiz identified Kane. This formality suggested not so much that Colonel Higashi had scruples against shooting the wrong man, but rather that he wanted to be certain that he did indeed have one of the leaders of the guerrillas who, not content with committing outrages in Mindanao, had unleashed hell in other islands.

Smith's sabotage, the hatchet work of Hong

Li and others of the Society of Heaven and Earth, and now Kane appearing as a sunshiner, all worried Colonel Higashi so much that he sent for his prisoner before the date set for court martial.

A platoon of troops surrounded Kane during the march from jail to headquarters. The move was made at night. The hour was not amazing, but the size of the guard was. Kane, insulated from all rumor, could not imagine what had been going on, yet something was in the air. He sensed that from the alertness of the soldiers, and from Captain Yamato's manner when, in the front office, he said, "No hope left. Throw yourself on the mercy of the court."

"Since everyone has decided I'm a guerrilla spy," Kane retorted, "I am sure everything else has been settled."

Yamato shrugged. "I am sorry you are obstinate."

Then they took him before Colonel Higashi, a man who preferred direct action. He quickly made clear the reasons behind the stalling, the persuasion, the subtlety, the unusual desire to get a statement when a fusillade would readily settle the matter.

"Mr. General Kane, every evidence points to surprise attack in this district. Outrages and sabotages by your guerrillas. Attempted rescue, maybe not—your men are tough-minded like my own—but trouble, definitely. Save yourself by—"

"Writing an order?" Kane cut in, with wry mockery, implicitly admitting his identity; for a written order had tricked the colonel in Capiz. "I'll try it, sir."

Higashi, holding the aces, had no urge to resent the jab.

"Your counsel represented you in your absence," he said, "before the summary court. You are guilty as charged. Sentence, to face firing squad, same to be executed at my discretion."

"I know you won't spare the horses, Colonel. Do I get a hearty meal and a cigar first?"

Higashi grinned. He'd spent a lot of time spying in the States. "Meal this evening was rich in vitamins and calories." Then he reached into his desk. "Good cigar, very best."

It was an Alhambra *Pigtail*. Kane squinted at the band, nodded. "Thank you, sir. This cost fifty *centavos*. The best."

HE deliberately removed the gilt and red band. He was rather pleased that his hand did not shake when, with the nails of thumb and middle finger, he pinched the tip; biting or cutting is barbarous. Higashi produced matches, made as if to strike one, then changed his mind. "Sit down, Mr. General Kane." Then, as a chair was slid to front the desk, he said smoothly, "Tell me from what

"You are guilty as charged," said Colonel Higashi. "Sentence, to face a firing squad at my discretion."

quarter the guerrillas strike. Give true information, and you are pardoned."

"Sorry, Colonel. My men are not for sale. Are yours?"

"Very soldierly. But see my point. Guerrillas raid a district by connivance with native non-cooperators. Sometimes, I regret, necessary investigation and reprisals make innocent suffer with guilty. I honor brave men, but guerrillas cannot conquer entire Japanese army. Not equal to one regiment."

Kane listened to his own argument and found it unpalatable. It is odd what a man can think and how he can run off at the mouth when he is griped by idleness. Higashi smiled shrewdly and without malice as he went on. "You are not selling your own men. When we set out to block them in the direction you tell me, they withdraw without losses. They are not to be trapped. The guerrilla has this advantage. When there is trapping, he makes the ambush, not falls into it."

"It's gone pretty much that way, hasn't it?"

The colonel nodded. "I regret you are not a regular soldier. My duty is onerous. I repeat, tell me and you do a service to your men, and to these peaceful natives. General Kuroda himself authorizes me to use discretion, commuting your sentence."

"Japanese prisoners—and some were taken at Bataan—do not sell their fellows. Anyway, I came alone. No one was to follow me. If I had come scouting, as you say, wouldn't I return first to report, to organize?"

"Guerrilla methods are irregular."

"Do you mean that my presence here convinces you that there's about to be a raid?"

Higashi shook his head. "No, but all signs, many signs. The Don Hilario tragedy. Sudden cessation of mysterious hatchet atrocities. Strange rebellion of Mr. Smith of the power company, and our failure to apprehend same. Much as in Capiz, warning symptoms cast shadows in advance. Do not evade longer."

Bit by bit, Kane was beginning to agree with the colonel in his contention that guerrillas—Datu Ryan and the Bishop and the others—could be infiltrating, actually might be slipping into the province. Higashi's persistence; the peculiar tension of the platoon of soldiers silently marching one prisoner to headquarters; Hong Li's first move toward rescue, which had not been repeated, when Chinese cunning could reasonably enough thwart ordinary military guards and pick a loophole in the old Spanish jail—all these things suggested that hell was about to boil through Iloilo, town and province.

Rescue—or vengeance?

The latter could take its time. The former, Kane sensed, would have to be a matter of hours, perhaps minutes, for behind Higashi's persuasion and courtesy he sensed an uneasiness. Up in Capiz, he had seen the man's high temper flare up. The strain would soon be too much. Kane could now feel the alternation of suppressed fury and the momentary victory of wheedling and logic.

Higashi broke the stretching silence by speaking in Japanese. Captain Yamato went to a filing case and brought out a large map, which he spread on the desk. The colonel made an inviting gesture. "Please mark reasonable approximation, precision is not demanded. I repeat, full deployment of force will prevent outbreak, confer benefits on all concerned. You to be hostage compelling—no, correction, *inducing* good behavior. Your mission becomes one of benevolence, not treason to comrades."

Higashi was actually selling himself the spirit of generosity; for the moment, the man was beyond doubt sincere. Yet this was a fragile state of mind, as Kane verified when he sighed and shook his head, then straightened up and stated, uncompromisingly, "I have nothing to say, Colonel. *Do with me as you please.*"

That echo of Capiz brought Higashi to his feet. "Very well!" Hand trembling, he struck a match. "Smoke your cigar!"

Whether the fire made Higashi's eyes glow, or whether it was fury and disappointment, Kane did not know; but certainly the little flame did not account for the sudden beading of sweat on the Jap's forehead. Kane drew, got his light. There was a command. Captain Yamato approached, bowed, extended his hand. "We are severe in war. So are your people. I am sorry, sir. Since I cannot defend or persuade, I salute you."

A moment of strange dizziness, a moment of thrill made Kane superior to the event. Though in a better cause, he and his own men had been as ruthless as any Jap. Ryan's grim humor, Haji's Moslem ferocity, the Bishop's Cromwell-touch, singing spirituals as he charged with his forty-inch *kampilan* and his single-action Colt—no gentle zephyrs these. Thinking of them gave him an intoxication, a sense of unreality comparable to what had gripped him in each final rush toward an attempt to borrow another piece of time from destiny.

So Kane smiled amiably and accepted the captain's hand. "I had my doubts, sir, but I believe now you meant well. Thank you."

Then the noncom of the guard gave a command. Yamato saluted the colonel and stepped from the room, going through an inner door. Higashi himself followed the escort, now only eight men: for the destination was a courtyard enclosed partially by the building and partially by a wall.

CHAPTER VII

A THIRD DEGREE BACKFIRES

FLOOD lights had been hooked up, Kane noted, to play on one wall; they made the standard string of mazdas look feeble and murky. Two civilian laborers had just completed a task. Ancient flagstones set in a pile and a heap of earth freshly excavated marked the prisoner's destination.

The squad halted. Kane was in the middle of the group of bayonets. The diggers passed through a wicket, whether into another court or into a passageway, Kane did not know. But a cry, blending with the spatter of a draggling volley, tore his composure. The wicket was open. The concussion echoed, hitting him with blows physical as well as mental.

He was to disappear. The civilians, probably on the black list, would never tell what they had dug. The implication might have strengthened Kane, had he been permitted time to ponder on the fact that the Japanese government did not care to risk further outbreaks like Don Hilario's and therefore kept his end secret. As it was, the soldiers opened their tight group, and nudged him toward the wall while he was still jerking from the impact of the volley.

A pistol cracked once, like the snap of a dry twig; one of those pea-shooters, administering a *coup de grace*, ended the choking sounds beyond the wicket. All, that is, except a vague and disturbing rattle and threshing.

Kane barely forced his legs to steadiness. The poise a man needs for facing a deliberately arranged and fatal routine takes so much effort that the least upset shakes his command.

Higashi said, "You do not need a blindfold. Not General Kane." He drew his straight

bladed sword, more of an anachronism than the sabre which the American army had discarded. He raised the clumsy-seeming strip of steel in a salute. Kane's teeth closed on his cigar. He lifted his glance somewhat over the line of rifles and glittering bayonets.

Why don't the silly ——s unfix 'em? he thought. *Ximenes said that a bayonet made a gun shoot high, or was it low? A regular soldier would know . . .*

The flood lights caught him full in the eye. It was better than a blindfold. But before they dazzled him, he had noted the skyglow of Iloilo: Where the town had been blacked out before, it was now lighted up.

"Afraid—waiting for Datu Ryan—"

An instant of intoxication. A man can't live forever. Few men have a large city especially illuminated as a guard against silently advancing vengeance.

Could Ryan be on the way? Not that it'd help, but—*it would help, even tomorrow.* Hong Li's radio would go into action. And Diane would know. He remembered his shrinking from the thought of marrying Diane, a handicapping stranger, to help her out of the country and to humor her dying father. The Bishop had performed the ceremony while Jap artillery still muttered and mumbled. But having a woman flung at you wasn't so bad, once the shock was over.

Hell, this won't be—

A command, the metallic jangle of Japanese, jarred him as had the ragged volley beyond the wicket. He forced his knees not to buckle. He clenched his fists. His teeth clicked, and the cigar, bitten off clean, fell from his mouth.

He did not feel a thing when the volley

Clearing the wicket with a leap, Kane left grave and executioners behind him.

crashed. He was mortally sick. The freezing of his legs kept him from dropping. Nothing had touched him. Then he crumpled, from reaction, and recovered only in time to keep his chin from touching the pavement.

Higashi was now beside him.

Paper crackled. A map spread out. "Where?" the colonel demanded.

Third degree.

They'd fired high over his head.

Kane understood now how Don Hilario had felt. A friend and a kinsman had betrayed the little *presidente*. Kane's nerves had been his betrayer; he had fallen when nothing had hit him.

The Jap's breath fanned his cheek. Higashi was sure, dead sure, that a tattered and shattered man would say almost anything. But Kane went amuck.

He snatched the colonel's pistol from its holster. "You skibbie ——!" he wanted to say, when the rat-tat-tat of the weapons started.

Flame ate into Higashi's tunic. Kane hadn't said a word. Before he could have spoken, the gate would have been blocked, whereas actually, it was still open, and the soldiers still stood at the order. Kane was moving by reaction. That second-wind, if emotion has "wind," drove him. Guerrilla-wise, he had once more caught them completely flatfooted.

HE left grave and executioners behind him. He cleared the wicket before their first yell, their first shot, their first footfall. In that abnormal clarity of his senses, he noted that there were no corpses in the passageway.

More third degree. *They want to know—they want to know—or they'd cut me down If Ryan's not on the way, something is!*

A volley smashed down the length of the passageway. Stone fragments and bullet jackets whined and whistled. Bits of metal bit into the back of his neck as he bounded around the angle which had won him an instant's grace. Where it went, he did not know, but this was relief, this was reprieve, this was battle—and how beautiful battle was compared to execution!

Skibbies couldn't shoot for sour apples. Somewhere men yelled, men raced, feet pounded. And then, ahead, in the backlash of the floodlight which reached out of the death-court, he saw the officer in khaki; glasses, campaign badges, everything. Holstered pistol, and reaching for it. A squad behind, a shavetail in front. A few slugs remained in Higashi's automatic, a contemptible little weapon, good only at close range or when jammed against a man's guts.

Kane yelled like a whole detachment of Moros. He stretched his long legs to close the gap, close in on the lieutenant who gaped behind his thick lenses. *Use him as a shield—he's fumbling with his holster—his gun's jammed. I'll knock him off—there's an open door behind him—the street—*

The thump of the firing squad's shoes filled the passageway. Kane, pistol close to his ribs, sidetracked. Lousy marksmen, they'd not dare fire, they'd hose the whole passageway.

They halted, yelled.

Kane yelled, "Where's your *judo*, you little ——!"

The man raised his hands. He shouted something. The soldiers did not shoot.

The sight of a Jap officer raising his hands was just too much of a shock. It had never happened before.

The hands came down, racing down, but the one-two-three jerk was clear. *The sign of fire!*

Kane remembered. He had reached a stage where his senses were acute beyond normal sharpness. Under any other circumstances, he would have cut the man down, but now he understood. He must not shoot at the sign which had given him safety. And then the man spoke. "Drop that gun, you damn fool! It's me!"

Kane dropped the gun. He recognized Hong Li.

Hong Li had without doubt made a service call to get that uniform. Better than just dropping the puny automatic, Kane stumbled on the protruding edge of a flagstone. Hong Li rasped a command. The Japs came to order arms. Hong Li's pistol covered Kane. "I just shot Higashi," Kane panted.

"I'll be damned!" the Chinese gasped. Then a rasp of Japanese and the soldiers marched off, presumably to help the colonel.

"Let's go," Hong Li said, and caught Kane's arm. "I got word. I thought you were a dead duck. I—"

The lights went out. All over town. Where there had been a sky glow there was now blackness, a murmuring, grumbling gloom. The fusillades had aroused people. Now the blackout excited them. Sirens screamed. Sentries shouted, passing calls from post to port. *Gugus* shrieked. The sleeping city came to a mad life.

Kane stretched his legs, following the sound of Hong Li's feet, for it was too dark for any other sense to function.

Motors were winding up. Bells jangled. Musketry rattled. Headlights slashed the gloom of the street. Hong Li's pistol whacked. Lights out, and then a crash against a dead electrolier.

"Run like hell," he panted.

"What you think I'm doing? Which way—what's up?"

Then came the boom of grenades, the sputter of machine guns, the screech and whine of

ricochets, and the shrieks of natives who, finding things had become serious, were ducking for cover. Halting in the angle of a buttress of an old Spanish building, Kane asked, "Hong, what in God's holy name's happened?"

"I sent the radio to Mindanao. Ryan said he was tired of sitting on his tail—I guess Ryan got off said tail," the hatchet-man answered. "Saboteur Smith has been a visiting fireman of the Society of Heaven and Earth. We turned him loose tonight to short circuit more power lines. The man is a genius at that stuff—he said he can climb a pole and barehanded short a 13,000-volt line and nothing to it."

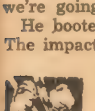
"Something's happening over that way!" Kane pointed toward the waterfront. "Lights there. And it can't be transformers burning up again."

"It ain't," the Chinese answered. "That's Ryan's navy, the damnedest navy I ever saw. It's the sign of fire, and boy, did I thank the Lord that someone taught you that gag or you'd have shot me down before I had a chance to holler *Kamerad*. Now shake the lead out —and fast!"

"My legs are weak," Kane answered, almost sobbing it.

Hong Li slapped him, one-two-three. "Snap out of it! The fun's just starting. You long-legged son of a ——, you can't crack up now, we're going places."

He booted Kane, giving him a heavy uplift. The impact gave Kane new life.



THEY raced along. The breeze had the stink of black powder and fish. It had the smell of fuel oil and gasoline. Red flames rose, higher and higher. Machine guns stuttered. Mortars coughed up shells, and the bursts shook the howling madness of Iloilo. Then came the blast of artillery.

"This way, you idiot!" Hong Li yelled furiously.

"But the fight—"

"Aw, nuts, that's double talk, there ain't no fight!"

And they ran from, not toward, the waterfront.

Whenever Kane fell and slashed hands and face and knees, Hong Li yanked him upright, and cried, "Get going, you jerk! Get on your feet, you stumblebum!"

Kane had not the foggiest idea of where he was going. Once they came on a flaming truck. Hong emptied his pistol into three dazed Jap soldiers.

Finally, on a hemp plantation, Kane saw a parked truck and halted. "This is it!" Hong said.

The engine roared to life.

Kane clambered into the cab, jamming himself in beside Hong and the Moro driver. Then a race down a paved road. After a few kilometers, they ditched the vehicle, but did not set it afire. A dash to the sea, and there a motorboat waited, a power boat. "U. S. property, lately taken over by Japs."

Kane fell into the cockpit, and passed out.

By the time the motorboat was beached in Mindanao, Kane had learned that Hong Li had lost little time in assembling the radio parts and sending them on, with a message for Ryan; and that Ryan, though not at the time aware of Kane's extreme danger, had sized up the situation as being one which offered his burlesque navy a bit of sport.

He had sacrificed half a dozen fishing *prahus*. These, sails set and going with the tide, were set afire and abandoned as they skimmed into the harbor; and under cover of that distraction, the *datu's* forces had made their raid from the land side.

"Me, I was working alone, practically," Hong Li continued, "not being sure Ryan would connect in time and not knowing how he'd hit. That Jap uniform and Saboteur Smith's favorite hobby were supposed to gum up Higashi's game, but he just about caught us with our pants at half mast. If you'd not jumped the gun—"

Then the first of Ryan's loot-loaded *prahus* hauled for the cove. Others followed. Ryan plunged through the surf, and after him came the admiral, wearing cocked hat and cutlass, and the two beer bottles taped together to simulate binoculars; Haji, Ximenes, and the big black Bishop, and all the others who had carried the ball while Kane and Hong Li had been retreating somewhat according to plan.

"Praise the Lawd!" Bishop Jackson boomed. "Ah feel like a buckwheat cake smeared on both sides with honey and rolled in molasses! Mistah Jim, Ah bet you done shooken yo'self loose from yo' notions about the evils of guerrilla sojering!"

Datu Ryan gave Kane no chance to answer. "Jim, in a way, that radio is going to be worth the crazy risk, but now that the shooting is over, tell me the truth: It wasn't the radio you went after; you just had a plain fool martyr complex making you want to face some of the kick-backs our guerrilla business gives civilians."

Kane's face tightened. For a number of reasons, he could not speak. While there had been casualties, not severe, yet heavy enough, he was thankful that the charter members were all on top.

Ryan shrugged. "All right, don't admit it. And quit counting heads. The raid paid off, and you can't make omelettes without cracking some eggs. But the answer's written all over you—you look like the 'after' in a Charles Atlas ad!"

"You're right," Kane finally admitted. "I was getting chicken-hearted. Sure I feel different about it now, only I'm just not a soldier and won't ever be."

"Oh, ——!" Ryan fairly yelled. "A soldier is just a cit in uniform, a civilian is just a soldier in plain clothes. There isn't any such thing as a non-combatant. I'm glad you went —and you really made your own getaway, which is soldiering, fellow!"

A familiar voice made Kane turn. "Hi, Jonesy, you educated son!"

"Red!" Kane eyed the grinning deserter. "You break out of sunshiner's heaven?"

"Uh-huh. Shell blew the stockade open. And I double-timed to make the boat and report for duty." He began to sing in a rusty, cracked baritone.

Oh, here I'm in the hoosegow, awaiting my discharge!
To hell with the corporal, and the sergeant of the guard!
To hell with your beans and your ——— damn slum!
So gimme my discharge, and I'll go back on the bum!

Datu Ryan chuckled. "That's the soldier of the old school, not worth a hoot in times of peace, but the real guts of an army when there's a shooting war. Hey, here's Saboteur Smith!"

And Kane faced a stocky little fellow whose beetling brows, deep-set eyes and swarthy skin made it practically wasted effort for him to bother with the turban and sarong which he had worn while disguised as a native.

"Hi, Kane. Go ahead and sock me. I got it coming—Lord, I poured it on you."

"So you're with us, too?"

"Sure am. I'll never wear pants again as long as I live. I been missing comfort all these years."

Kane said to Ryan, "Datu, you were all off the beam, about my reasons for going to Iloilo. It was a recruiting trip."

When they finally reached guerrilla headquarters, Kane would have stood over Hong Li to hound the radio man into tuning up the mongrel transmitter then and there, working at the job until Australia received and acknowledged the first message from the unexplored heart of Mindanao. But Ryan saved the harassed hatchet-man.

"Forgot to tell you, Jim. A fishing *prahu*—that *prahu*—landed while you were away. Letter for you."

Kane got the shakes so bad he ended by saying, "You open it."

Sea water had made message and address illegible, but the enclosed snapshot, though soggy and crumpled, retained its identity. It was the picture of half a dozen WACs. One of them was Diane, the girl he had married to help get her out of the islands. She looked grand in uniform.

Finally Kane said, "I guess that's my answer on what is a civilian! Hong, get that radio going, shake it up!"

"That ain't all," the Bishop cut in. "They done brung us this heah box full of things and stuff."

Kane's hopes prayed, *Quinine, antiseptics, sulfanilamide*—

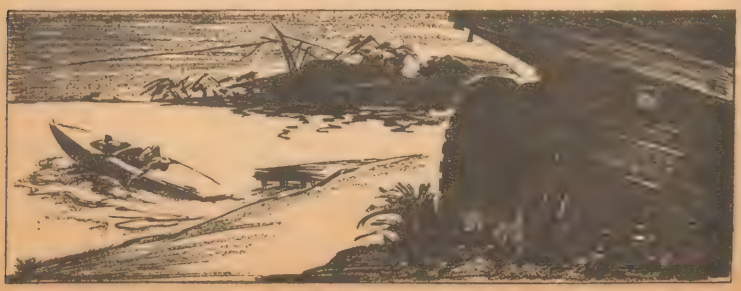
But the Bishop had lifted the lid. There was the glint of many blades: hunting knives, homemade bolos, daggers, stilettos, machetes. And the Bishop was doubled up with laughter. It shook the jungle, it frightened the monkeys, it infuriated the parrots. He howled, he roared, he bellowed.

When he was able to speak, he said, "I jest can't help it! Knives—and the note what they sent—*fo' the Moro boys!*"

Back in the States, there had been a drive: GIVE A KNIFE AND SAVE A LIFE. The note made that very clear.

Then Kane saw Haji Maulana's face as he eyed the weapons. At last the old man said, "*Señor*, is lucky you have got one radio transmitter now, or next time, maybe they send us some Japs, of which we have equal need."

THE END



QUIET FLOWED THE COLUMBIA

By HECTOR CHEVIGNY

At Tarakanov's signal, the two hunters hurled the screaming, dying Aleut into the sea.

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

SHE was a Russian, the first white woman who ever set foot on that whole wild coast north of California. Her name was Anna Petrovna, she was blond and young and her eyes were very blue, for she came from St. Petersburg, and she became the bride of Utramaka, chief of the tribe whose home is still at Cape Flattery, at the mouth of the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

Little has been told of the times when Russia controlled the Aleutian islands and Alaska, yet only a hundred and thirty years ago the sole important settlement of the white man between Mexico and the Arctic was the Russian port at Sitka, then called New Archangel. Even San Francisco was still only a sleepy garrison of thirty soldiers there to guard a mission outpost. The Russians had steadily pushed along the Aleutians from Siberia until Alexander Baranov, their leader, built at New Archangel his strong wooden fort of timbers eight feet thick, crowning the rock he had wrested from the

bloodthirsty Thlingits with his two-storied kremlin and commanding Sitka Sound with a bastion mounting sixty guns. To this weird place of dark forests and stupendous mountains often came the shipmasters trading in the North Pacific for furs to sell at Canton.

Old Baranov, though, wasn't resting on this achievement. He had orders from the Tsar to plant more Russian settlements, one around the Columbia River, where there was nothing, and another in California, where the Spanish were weak. Actual occupation, Baranov knew well, was half the battle in claiming a region. He knew, too, he had to hurry. In 1806 he heard that the Yankees also had their eye on the Columbia region and had sent explorers named Lewis and Clark to look it over. When the shipmasters called at New Archangel, Baranov loved to give them big *prazniks* in his famous banquet-hall, during which everybody had to eat great quantities of food and get very drunk. Some say he did it to make his guests talk. Maybe so, for Baranov always knew what went on in the world, and when he heard that Lewis and Clark had withdrawn from the Northwest country, he hurried to outfit two ships to explore and pick colonial sites on behalf of Russia.

One ship, the *Kodiak*, was to take a body of men under Ivan Kuskov to reconnoiter California; the second, the small schooner *Nikolai*, was to do the same in the Columbia region with twenty-five men, Russian hunters and Aleuts, under Vassili Tarakanov. Both Kuskov and Tarakanov were old hands at such work, having been with Baranov the twenty years he had battled wind, sea and treacherous Indians southward from his first base on Kodiak Island. It was Tarakanov who preserved this story, many years afterwards, dictating—for he could neither read nor write—to Father Ivan Shishkin, the archpriest at Unalaska, his memories of their shipwreck and bitter captivity among the Cape Flattery Indians and of what happened to Anna Petrovna.

When Captain Nikolai Bulygin brought Anna Petrovna as his bride to New Archangel, when he came fresh from the Imperial naval school at St. Petersburg to serve as navigator on Baranov's sailing-ships, they tried to tell him that America was no place for a young and pretty girl. There were not five Russian women in all of Alaska and as for the two hundred and fifty men at New Archangel, most were of a kind even Baranov had a hard time controlling. Mostly they were *promyshleniks*, Siberian woodsmen with every blood of Asia in their veins and showing in their narrow Mongol eyes and Yakut cheekbones; and those who were not often had notched ears and slit noses, indicating exile for very serious crimes indeed.

But Captain Bulygin was not the kind who accepted much advice. Though of good family, he had been only a midshipman when he graduated, but here he was suddenly a commander and had rank and class. As things turned out, though, Anna would have been safe at New Archangel—safer than with him on the Columbia expedition, which was where Bulygin insisted on taking her when Baranov instructed him to navigate the schooner down there. She was always so gay and friendly that no one would have harmed a hair of her head, which was yellow as flax, nor have touched a finger to her body, which moved with such grace that most of the men who saw her sighed because they realized that they might never see another of her kind again in this world—most certainly not those destined to remain in America all their lives, amid these awesome forests and mountains and driving rains and constant mists, a world so different from the bright plains of Russia.

NOBODY understood why Baranov gave his consent to her going. Least of all Tarakanov, who would have to do the worrying if anything happened to them. The coast they were to explore was rocky, beset with fogs and strange currents, and the Indians had a practice of capturing prisoners for slaves. Maybe her teasing influenced the old governor. She wanted to be the first woman to set foot on the site of the next Russian colony in America. Far from finding America a hardship, she had been thrilled by all her experiences. Why Bulygin wanted her to come was plain enough, though; they would be gone all winter and he was too jealous to leave her behind.

It was late fall of 1808 when the two vessels sailed from Sitka Sound. They dropped swiftly southward, encountering nothing worse than the heavy seasonal rains, until along Vancouver Island the *Nikolai* slowed up to begin exploring the numerous bays and inlets and buy furs from the villages they could see above the forests, while the *Kodiak* stayed on her course to California. The plan was for them to meet in the spring at a central point, Gray's Harbor on the Washington coast.

Tarakanov had charge of the trading, as *prikazchik* of the expedition. They approached each village warily, with bullock-hide screens around the deck against surprise attacks of arrows and with half the crew at the falconets or standing guard with Moscow muskets. Though Anna was an interested and thrilled spectator of all they did, to everyone's relief she gave no trouble but obeyed orders meekly. Tarakanov addressed Bulygin as little as possible, and then always respectfully, as befit his class. The captain was an excellent navigator, but there was a difference between these seas and the milder Baltic coast on which he had trained, and he was inclined to underrate the dangers.

Off Clayoquot Sound they got into trouble. They had put into the bay and signalled the huge Indian village there that they had come

to trade. Immediately more than two hundred canoes with prows like Viking cutters put out from shore, and before the falconets could disperse them or Bulygin withdraw in a cloud of powder-smoke, murderous showers of arrows fell on deck and an Aleut member of the crew lay dying with a shaft in his belly.

Aleuts scream when injured. This one's yells were heart-rending. Anna, white-faced, had seen everything from the door of her cabin. Bulygin strode aft to the group kneeling about the man. "He is dying?"

Tarakanov nodded.

"Must he scream like this? If he is dying, throw him overboard."

Tarakanov knew these naval men, but he answered, "Aleuts are Russians, Nikolai Isakovich. They are baptized, like us. We must wait until he dies, then say the prayers."

Bulygin rapped out, "Obey orders! Those screams are shaking all our nerves."

Anna had come aft, unobserved. "Nikolai!" she broke in. "Vassili Petrovich said the man is a Christian. Are you mad?"

He whirled on her, his face white above his beard. "What did I tell you I am when at sea? No one questions my orders! You have no business in this part of the ship."

Anna stared at him a moment, her eyes wide. Then she turned and fled back to her cabin. Bulygin looked at Tarakonov and motioned brusquely toward the sea.

Tarakanov shrugged, signaled to the hunters Bolotov and Kurmachev. Together they swung the screaming, dying Aleut between them and heaved him into the passing sea.

The crew looked on with wooden faces. That Aleut had been a good hunter and had fought side by side with the Russians at Sitka and at the Beaver Bay massacre.

As they kept on to the south, crossing the mouth of Juan de Fuca Straits to the Washington coast, the totems disappeared as the distinguishing mark of Indian villages. Indeed, they could see no natives at all and a party went ashore to reconnoiter the Quillayute River.

It was the first of November. Evening fell calmly. But Bulygin was too confident about the anchorage of the *Nikolai*. A steady sea-current made her chafe her cables and when a light southeaster sprang up, she went immediately on the rocks. By dawn a high surf pounded up by a gale beat her with such force they knew there was nothing to do but take what they could get off her. By nightfall the stout little schooner was breaking up before their eyes.

BULYGIN was stricken dumb at the speed with which it all happened. As night fell he sat on a driftwood log and stared unseeingly into the fire the men made to dry their muskets, powder, garments and the stores they had salvaged. Just twenty-four hours before, everything had seemed so certain and safe. Now they were stranded on a wide beach fronted by an angry sea and backed by what seemed an impenetrable dark, wet forest. The storm had brought the winter rains sluicing down with idiot fury. Fortunately, all had good Aleut sealgut parkas and fur mukluks for the feet. Despite these, Anna Petrovna sat close to her silent husband and shivered.

Now the men joined them around the fire, ate a little dried salmon from the stores and took counsel. Each man had his say, Russians and Aleuts alike, as the custom was. The course seemed clear, all agreed. Gray's Harbor, where Kuskov would meet them in the spring, lay not more than seventy English miles to the south. Three days' brisk walking and they could camp the winter there. They would pack what stores they could, burying the rest here, and depend on game on the way.

The calm way with which the men took their predicament reassured Anna a little, for she brightened and her eyes took on some of their old interested sparkle. This was beginning to be an adventure of the kind she had heard about so often at New Archangel. She slipped a hand into her husband's and squeezed his fingers reassuringly as she watched the Russian hunters go silently and efficiently about preparing a breastwork of driftwood against possible surprise attacks during the night. But Bulygin did not return her soft pressure. It is a tragic experience for a mariner, the loss of his first ship.

Kotelnikov stood sentry while they tried to sleep under the cold rain, but they were surprised just the same. About midnight a silent shower of arrows descended on them from the forest. Kotelnikov gave the cry and all sprang from sleep, muskets in hand, and kneeled behind the driftwood. But the attack was not repeated; that was all there was to it, that one silent shower of arrows. Were the feathered shafts not sticking up in the wet sand all around them, they would have thought they had been dreaming.

At dawn they began their trek, the twenty-five men and the girl. Tarakanov set the pace they were used to, but an exclamation from Anna soon stopped them. She could not keep up, especially in her heavy mukluks. Kurmachev cursed under his breath but at a look from Tarakanov nobody gave any further sign of what he was thinking. They wanted no quarrels with the brooding, silent and probably frightened Bulygin.

But more than Anna was to delay them. Plainly a file of Indians followed them through the forest that bordered the beach. When they least expected it a shower of arrows would fall on them. It was demoralizing and destructive of rest. It was also wasteful of ammunition.

The Russians fired and fired into the woods, but heard no answering cries. Their enemies seemed a part of the forest itself. Were the very trees firing these arrows?

They came to a river too deep to ford, marked on the charts as the Ohalat. Tarakanov knew where they were because, far out to sea, they could make out the looming mass of Destruction Island. Building a raft was discussed, but sight of smoke from an Indian village upriver decided them to try a faster crossing.

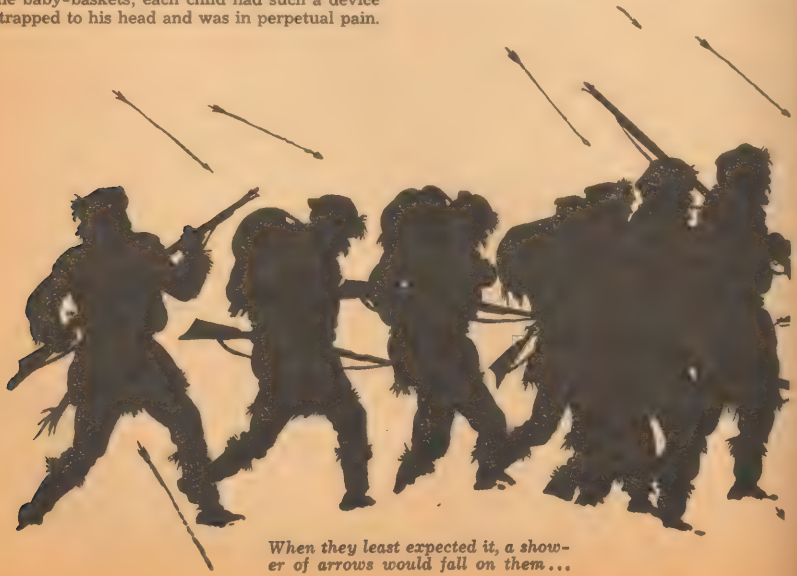
Muskets in readiness, they formed a circle with Anna in their midst and walked boldly into the village clearing. The dwellings of these Indians were much like those of their northern brethren, long communal houses in which ten to twenty families could live together, though much more poorly made. Their sudden appearance and leveled guns, their strange, bearded faces and heavy fur dress caused a precipitate rush of the inhabitants for the woods. Women screamed, snatching up squalling children and overturning cook-pots into fires. The air stank of drying fish and rancid wood-smoke. From almost every tree-trunk, it seemed, there hung papoose baskets from which thin wails never ceased to come. The uproar brought men running in from the forest. Anna shivered and drew close to her husband when she saw them, for these men had high, fantastic conical skulls, rising to a peak—shaped that way in babyhood by boards strapped to their foreheads. This was the reason for the never-ceasing wails from the baby-baskets; each child had such a device strapped to his head and was in perpetual pain.

TARAKANOV made signs that all they wished was transportation across the river, but it was several minutes before the Indians paid attention to him. They were all staring, fascinated, at Anna's fairness of skin and hair. Many uttered exclamations of wonder. The astonished sign went around, "White woman!"

"Why, they can smile!" exclaimed Anna Petrovna suddenly. And she smiled herself.

But Bulygin did not smile. When an Indian impulsively reached out to touch Anna wonderingly on the sleeve, he struck back his arm. "Get on with it, Vassili Petrovich," he told Tarakanov brusquely.

The Indians moved uneasily back and their expressions suddenly grew curiously vacant. Tarakanov repeated his signs. These Indians were not like the northern natives; they were of a much lower order of physique and intelligence. Yet they seemed to understand the Thlingit signs, for after much talk and gesticulation among themselves they finally hauled a couple of long canoes out of the brush and indicated they could be used. By this time the women and children had recovered from their fright and also crowded forward to stare at Anna. Soon there must have been two hundred of them. The Russians did not relax vigilance. They decided to send Anna and the hunter Sovashnikov with their goods in one canoe, and nine men in the other, on the first trip, while



When they least expected it, a shower of arrows would fall on them...

the remainder stayed on the bank and covered their passage with their muskets; after which the same would be done for them by those who had reached the opposite bank.

They made a mistake in letting the Indians paddle the canoes. When the two boats were halfway across, some signal was apparently given and the Indians in the second canoe pulled a plug and jumped out. Instantly both shores were alive with Indians firing arrows as fast as they could at the Russians struggling in the water and those still ashore. Anna's canoe was not overturned, though; it was hurriedly beached. Sovashnikov gurgled a dying scream as an arrow pierced his throat, and Anna's own surprised cry was choked off as savage hands reached to whisk her into the forest, a captive. Bulygin cursed like a madman but he could have saved his breath. Tarakanov and the rest were on their knees firing as fast as they could, but each had only a musket apiece and had to reload.

They covered the escape of four of the men in the water to shore, but five were struck by the arrows and were swept, struggling like impaled fish, out to sea. Indians pressed on them from all sides. Tarakanov ordered a retreat to the beach. Bulygin cursed him and countermanded the order, but the men were already running for the bulwarks of driftwood on the beach. Tarakanov could only grab Bulygin and pull him to safety.

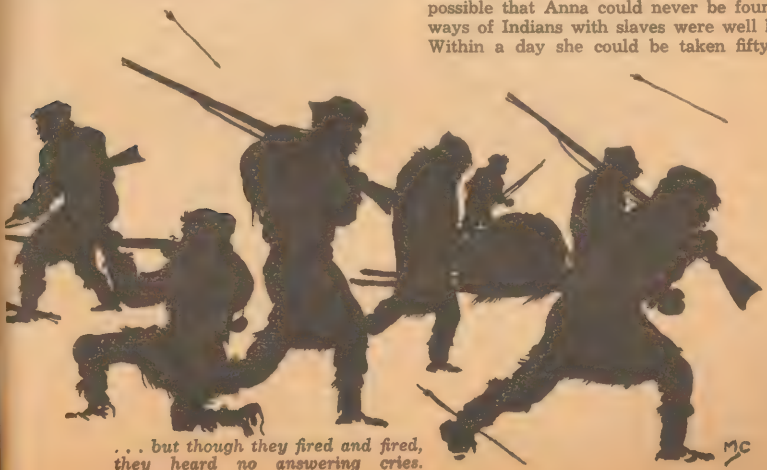
They were not pursued to the beach. The men, ignoring the raving Bulygin, took counsel quickly. Their losses were severe—six men, nine muskets, half their powder, all their stores. Nevertheless they planned to attack the village, capture hostages, force the return of Anna and their goods which were in her canoe. When Bulygin understood that the retreat had been absolutely necessary to reload and re-form, he quieted and grimly agreed to everything.

But when the men again burst on the village clearing with leveled muskets, they stopped short in surprise. The fires still burned under the cooking-pots, the drying fish still hung from the racks, but gone were the papoose-baskets from the trees and dead silence reigned except for the mocking crows that wheeled overhead. The inhabitants had vanished into thin air, taking Anna with them.

Bulygin crashed headlong into the brush and threshed it madly, calling Anna's name. Tarakanov quietly ordered the men to separate and follow every trail.

It was useless. As evening fell, one by one the men returned, exhausted and hungry, to tell the same story. Though they had scoured the forest for miles they had found no sign of a single Indian, nor of Anna. Bulygin sat by the welcome fire and listened to each report like a man stunned.

THE men wolfed with distaste some of the dried fish found in the village and carefully avoided looking at their captain. A decision had to be made as to what to do now, and it might not be pleasant for him to hear. Tarakanov called the council. Bulygin twisted his hands and listened as each man gave his opinion. There were grave reasons for going on to Gray's Harbor without delay. They could easily waste all the ammunition they had looking for Anna, and have none left to protect themselves on the way to Gray's Harbor. It was only too possible that Anna could never be found—the ways of Indians with slaves were well known. Within a day she could be taken fifty, sixty



. . . but though they fired and fired, they heard no answering cries.

miles away to some village in the impenetrable interior and sold there. They had no provisions on which to continue the trek, game having been scarcer than they had reckoned on.

Yet Kuskov would not be at Gray's Harbor until spring, and by wintering in the neighborhood they stood a chance of hearing about Anna, or even capturing hostages with which they could force her return. It was not the wisest decision, for if they failed to meet Kuskov in the spring, Baranov at New Archangel could lose much time looking for them; but in each man's mind stood the image of Anna Petrovna in Indian captivity, and this they could not bear.

Bulygin thanked them with tears in his eyes for their decision, but no one told him he was welcome. His insistence on bringing Anna could yet cost them their lives, and for that no man is grateful.

But Anna had not been taken far, as they learned next morning while warily tramping upriver in search of a place they could fortify. They pulled up short, muskets leveled, when a lone Indian stepped out on the trail and signified his desire for a parley. Tarakanov watched the complicated series of gestures, then turned to Bulygin.

"He says he offers Anna Petrovna for ransom, for the price of all our guns and powder, he translated.

Bulygin seemed surprised that anyone should even bother to translate such a question. "Well, tell him we agree, of course!"

TARAKANOV'S eyes turned to the bearded faces of his comrades and one by one read their expressions —Kurmachev, Bolotov the pious one, Kotelnikov and the rest. Some of these men had been at the massacre of Sitka and again at its retaking. One had been through the burning of Yakutat. All had known shipwreck, in some cases two and three times. Such experiences do not breed cowards. But there is a difference between bravery and foolishness. To be unarmed in these forests would mean death for them all.

Tarakanov turned back to the Indian and made him understand that no business could be talked until they knew for themselves that Anna was alive and unharmed. The Indian seemed to expect this, for he grunted what seemed to be assent and disappeared into the forest.

Bulygin was beside himself. "You have lost our chance to get her back," he stormed. "We should have captured that man!"

"You will see her again, Nikolai Isaakovich," said Tarakanov, quietly.

To the men he gave the order to continue the march toward the mountains they could see ahead.

They saw Anna, two days later. They had come to a bluff they liked and were chopping trees for their fort when the man on sentry brought them to attention. A group of six or seven Indians, including the one they met on the trail, came out of the woods with Anna in their midst. When she saw Bulygin she screamed and broke from her captors, stumbled and fell forward on the wet ground. Bulygin threw away his musket and raised her tenderly. Her long flaxen hair was matted with earth, her parka was torn across one shoulder and her mukluks were in shreds.

"Oh, my dearest, my beloved," she sobbed in his arms.

Her husband held her close and smoothed her tangled hair. "What have they done to you, *golubchik?*" he asked over and over again, brokenly. "What have they done to you?"

The tough Russian hunters had to turn away their faces. They had seen many things in America, things they would have liked to forget, but this they could not look upon.

It soon became evident that letting the Russians see Anna in this condition was intended as a gesture of the sheerest cruelty, and no more. The price of ransom, as communicated by signs, had gone up sharply—four more muskets than they possessed. Tarakanov told the actual number they had and indicated that a reasonable price would be met, but the Indians' refusal was emphatic.

They had been watching the scene before them impassively, with folded arms, as the sign-making went on. Now they stepped forward to separate Anna from Bulygin. She sobbed as if her heart would break and clung the closer. Bulygin screamed at the hunters, "Fire on them! Fire!"

The men hesitantly raised their muskets but Tarakanov struck them down sharply; these Indians had not walked defenseless into the white man's fire. He was right. At least fifty of them came suddenly out of the forest, armed with bows and spears and here and there an antique fowling-piece. They did not attack but their silent presence was sufficient guard for their companions while they got the screaming Anna loose from Bulygin. A couple of them then held the writhing officer on the ground as the rest kicked and pushed her ahead of them into the woods and down a trail. When she was gone, Bulygin was let go. Suddenly, as if by magic, the clearing was free of Indians.

Bulygin turned on Tarakanov like a man gone insane, but Kurmachev sprang between them. "What could we do? One salvo in the open like this, and we would have all been slaughtered before we could reload. Then where would Anna have been?"

Bulygin sank to his knees and burst into tears. Tarakanov picked up their one axe in silence. In silence, too, the sentries went back to their posts and the men resumed the job of fortifying the bluff for the winter.

ON THE tenth of February, a crude boat they had built that winter bore them down the Ohalat River. None of them had died, but they all looked like beings from some strange, savage world. Their beards were long and unkempt. They had thrown away their worn mukluks and had tied strips of undressed deer-hide about their feet. Two wore parkas they had sewn from the skins of wolves. Bulygin would never have been taken for the smart midshipman who once had graduated from the naval school at St. Petersburg; his hair had turned quite gray.

They had a little carefully-dried meat aboard and they meant it, if they made it down-river, to try shooting the surf at its mouth and sail to Destruction Island, where they hoped to attract the attention of a passing ship. Walking to Gray's Harbor was now out of the question. It had cost them heavily to live that winter; game had been scarce. Their powder was gone.

A mile from the sea they were startled by Kurmachev, who rose excitedly and pointed above the forest. Smoke! The Indian village below must be inhabited again! The boat was hurriedly beached and hidden in the willows to follow a new plan.

Some of the men remained behind to guard the boat; Tarakanov led the rest until they located a well-traveled trail alongside which they hid. Soon they were rewarded by hearing voices and seeing two Indian girls come sauntering with berry-boxes in their hands, talking to a youth in a breech-clout. Their laughter died, though, when the Russians rose like strange wild beasts around them, gagged them quickly and tied their wrists. The youth was sent back with the message that the girls would be killed unless the white woman was returned immediately. The girls were taken to the hidden boat and the agonizing wait began. Fortunately for Bulygin's sanity, answer came that they would see Anna in a few days.

Three days had passed, when an Indian appeared to ask the Russians to come to the village.

They had virtually nothing with which to load their muskets but they took them along for at least the appearance of protection.

They saw Anna, but not the Anna they remembered. She was pale, but her hair was longer than ever, and well-brushed as it fell across shoulders draped in a fine deerskin toga edged with ermine. Her small feet were encased in moccasins of sea-otter fur. She wore a necklace and bracelet of beaten copper. Beside her stood an immense figure of a man, well over six feet in height, who might have been very handsome had it not been for the flattened skull and the grotesque indication of a tribal confederacy painted on his face, the red-and-black symbol of the killer-whale. The Russians knew he came of a tribe whose customs derived from those of the fierce Thlingits of the north.

Bulygin's face had turned the color of dirty sand. He opened his mouth but his throat would not let the words come out. It was Tarakanov who first found words. Speaking rapidly, while he had the chance, he explained to Anna their plan to ransom her, or take her by force if necessary, and run the gauntlet of the river to Destruction Island.

Tarakanov wondered, even as he talked, if she were listening to him. She looked only at Bulygin. But she had heard. Her own throat seemed constricted, for she had to swallow hard before she could answer. "I," she finally said, "am the one who has come to ransom you."

Tarakanov must have looked very surprised, for she smiled fleetingly, a smile terrible in its sadness. She continued to look only at Bulygin, as if she longed to throw herself into his arms, to sob and cry and ask for comfort, but for some reason did not dare.

"I caused all this," she managed to go on. "Had it not been for me you would all long since have been safe. This is Utramaka, chief of the tribe at Cape Flattery. He bought me this winter, but he made me his wife, not his slave. I think I would have killed myself if he had not. I did not know where you were or what had happened to you. I hurried to learn their language and I understand that in marrying me Utramaka thinks he has allied himself with the white man."

Her words had been coming faster and faster as she talked. Now they came in a torrent, as if she wanted to explain quickly before Bulygin could say anything. "He says he will be kind to you, if you will come to his village at Neah Bay. I have told him you are my people. Utramaka has been strangely kind, in the only way he knows. As you see, I am well-fed. Slaves wait on me. Surely it is better than wandering half-starved in the forest. Do what I tell you—surrender to him. But for the lose of God, do not indicate, Nikolai, that you are my husband. I do not know what he would do to us all if he should hear it."

The mouths of all the Russians hung open with surprise.

"Don't hold council over this," she urged hurriedly. "Don't hesitate. Utramaka will never sell me and I know you can never take me by force. You have no priming in those guns. Even if you get out to that island, there is no food on it. They will besiege you in their long canoes until you die of starvation or surrender. Then they would make slaves of you. Come to Neah Bay, remain near me, for the love of God! Don't let yourselves be made slaves. I have seen their slaves and their lot is pitiable."

All through this Bulygin had only stared, without speaking, like the rest. Now he suddenly gave a strangled cry, raised a musket and aimed it at Anna's heart. Only Bolotov's quick action in hitting the barrel prevented a mur-

der. Bulygin threw the weapon from him and sprang for Anna's throat, but the huge Indian was too quick for him, too. He stepped forward, met Bulygin's rush, and with a single sweep of that great, bronze arm sent him crashing into a tree. Bulygin slumped to the ground, partly stunned. The Indian frowned and said a phrase or two to Anna in an oddly sibilant language.

She had raised her arm to her mouth, as if to suppress a cry. She looked quickly to Tarakanov. Her lips were taut with agony. "Utramaka asks what that man is to me. I told him he is mad. Remember that."

The Russians looked at one another, then their eyes fell to the ground with embarrassment. "We cannot decide without a council, Anna Petrovna," Bolotov said.

The others nodded. "Then hurry," she pleaded. "Make Nikolai understand. Make him realize that what I have done was to pay the price of my foolishness in coming with you, that it was for him and for you. I will explain that you insist on conferring together, and ask Utramaka to wait here in this village for your decision."

The Russians nodded and, a couple of them lifting the half-conscious Bulygin as Kotelnikov and Kurmachev guarded their rear, they made their way back to their boat hidden in the willows. They laid Bulygin down on the floorboards. He was coming to and muttering.

The council was violent. Four of the men wanted to accept Anna's proposal and give themselves up to Utramaka. She was right, they hadn't a chance on Destruction Island and could starve trying to make Gray's Harbor now. Neah Bay was at the mouth of De Fuca Straits, where ships might put in occasionally. Others disagreed emphatically. Orchennikov spat. "Am I a dog, to buy food and a place to sleep at such a price? Anna Petrovna has brought shame on the Russian people."

"You should have let Nikolai Isaakovich kill her," another said. "It is what she deserves."

Bolotov answered this spiritedly. "And when you, Vladimir Ivanich, on Cook's Inlet married an Aleut girl for your term of service with Baranov, that was not shaming the Russian people? Or when Baranov married the Kenai woman to keep the peace on Prince William Sound? What would you have done in Anna's place? Chosen slavery to marriage? I say to you that she is a great and brave woman to face us and try to save our lives—a true saint. It took courage to look at Nikolai Isaakovich to-

day and say what we all heard and surely remember."

Bolotov had once studied to be a priest and all listened to his words, yet when the votes were cast only the first four voted to go to Neah Bay.

"What of Nikolai Isaakovich?" asked Kurmachev. "Does he go with us to Neah Bay, or with the sixteen who will try making Destruction Island?"

"He had best not go with us to Neah Bay," said Tarakanov, for Bulygin still lay in the boat staring at the sky and had taken no part in the council. "For God alone knows what might happen if he should live in the same village with Anna Petrovna."

Kneeling, there on the river bank the next morning, they asked Bolotov to say such prayers as he remembered, both for those going with Anna and those who would now put to sea. Only Bulygin could not kneel. How can a man pray whose heart is filled only with hatred for the thing he loves? His face bore the gray, lifeless look of one past all comfort.

They said farewell and the boat slid off downstream. The four who remained watched until she hit the surf. Then their hearts were heavy and they knew they would all be together at Neah Bay after all, for the boat immediately capsized and all lost their remaining guns and few grains of powder.

In single file they marched for days through the wet woods, behind the slaves with lackluster eyes and filthy hair who carried the fair wife of Utramaka in a chair of woven willow-withes. Bulygin's set jaw gave proof of his understanding that his silence was the price of his companion's lives.

It rains often at Neah Bay, and the sun seldom penetrates the fog and mists which shroud the mouth of Juan de Fuca Straits and which, for centuries, kept that enormous waterway to Puget Sound hidden from curious explorers. The longest of the communal dwellings was Utramaka's, and in it, with forty Indian women,

Utramaka sent Bulygin crashing into a tree with a single sweep of his great, bronzed arm. Bulygin slumped to the ground, partly stunned.

Anna Petrovna lived. A fire always burned on a bed of sand in the middle and the smoke escaped through the roof. At night, burning candlefish were impaled to the huge cedar beams to give smoky illumination, and the air stank of roasting meat, boiling fish and fresh-cut hemlock. From the papoose-baskets hung on every roof-pole there came, winter and summer, day and night, the wailing of unremitting pain, for each tiny forehead had its board strapped to it to flatten it. The Russians scraped skins, cleaned fish and cut wood—and watched and prayed for the ship that might dare to enter those boiling tide-rips of the Straits to rescue them. Surely wandering traders put in occasionally. Surely, too, Baranov must know by now that they were lost and would be instructing shipmasters to look for his men.

Bulygin worked with the rest, and with the rest squatted around the pot and reached into it for a piece of fish or meat, and lay down at night with the rest to sleep in one of the long communal houses. But he seldom spoke. His companions came to hate him, after many weeks, because he refused to give Anna Petrovna, when she passed by, even the secret look of understanding and love that would have been the one reward she would ask in her suffering. Instead he averted his eyes. "I know no one named Anna Petrovna," he would mutter.

March and April passed in this misery, and then June. Now the Russians' watch toward the sea was unceasing, for this was the season when the shipmasters passed by on their way from Honolulu to New Archangel. In June,

Daily, Tarakanov flew his kite high above the clouds, hoping to attact the attention of some passing ship.

Anna was heard to give hard, wracking coughs which made the experienced hunters prick up their ears. She became very ill late that summer, and they tried to get Bulygin to go and see her, where she lay on a bed of skins in Utramaka's house. But he would not.

The end came fast. The revolting food, the lack of privacy, the cold and wet did not help her lung-fever, yet let no man say that no one ever dies of heartbreak. In September she was dead.

Utramaka, with the indifference of his tribe, then threw her body to the crows. The Russians, though, buried her with such prayers as Bolotov remembered from the books, and burned her name on the wooden cross they put over her. Bulygin was angry when they asked him to see her buried. "I know of no one who is dead," he answered savagely.

But he knew only too well. Five months after Anna's passing, a year from the time they came to Neah Bay, they found him dead, too. They buried him beside the girl who had come with him as his bride to America. "Nikolai Isaakovich Bulygin," they burned on his cross. "Captain of His Imperial Majesty's Navy."

WOULD those who remained ever see New Archangel again? It seemed an ominous sign when Utramaka sold Kotelnikov into slavery, no one knew where. They sickened for the sight of home and swore that if God ever gave them the grace to see Russia again, they would fall down and kiss the soil. They lived like the Indians now, and wore their garments and found themselves using the dialect in their speech to one another. They told themselves they must remember they were Russians. At Eastertime they gathered sea-gull eggs, boiled them hard and gave them to one another with the kiss of peace, saying "Christ is risen!" in an effort to remember that at home there were men and women who performed that happy old ritual of returning spring with joy instead of sadness. With hardly-hidden despair.

they kept watch again over the Straits, for another season was coming when ships would pass by on their way to see Baranov.

Tarakanov then thought of making a kite. Patiently he built it of thin sealgut stretched tight over a wooden frame. All of them worked to make enough gut string to fly it above the clouds so that it could be seen from out at sea and tell some passing shipmaster that white men were here, in need of help.

Daily, through that May and June, Tarakanov flew the kite, to the delight of the Indian children. Then one day, into their unbelieving ken, a brig came creeping out of the mist and their fevered eyes made out her name. She was the *Lydia*, of Boston.

It was the most beautiful name they had ever heard and the hoarse voice of Captain John Brown asking through a megaphone who in hell was flying that kite was, though they could not understand the words, the sweetest sound in Christendom.

Five vessels were in port before New Archangel: the *Mercury, Isabella, Albatross, Enterprise* and the brig *Lydia*. Old Governor Alexander Baranov looked down on them through the window of his office in his great wooden kremlin as Tarakanov came to the end of his report.

"And it cost Captain Brown sixty-five yards of cloth, thirteen locksmith's saws, twenty-six neckties, thirteen looking-glasses and sixty-five bags of powder and shot to ransom us. Utramaka did not want to give Bolotov and Kurmachev up, and it was not until Captain Brown threatened to hang him that they were released." The hard, gnarled hands of the old hunter rubbed his knees nervously as he spoke. "There were but thirteen of us to rescue," he concluded. "Kotelnikov was too far away to be found."

"Half the expedition was lost, then." Baranov took off his square-lensed spectacles and wiped them fumblingly. His fingers were gnarled and crooked with his own years of sleeping in wet forests and on exposed beaches. "It is hard, Vassili Petrovich, to tell a man that his privations and sufferings have been in vain. Kuskov was late getting to Gray's Harbor. He concluded you had gone home. It was not until he came here that he knew you were lost, somewhere on that coast. Meanwhile"—he indicated the largest vessel at anchor, the *Enterprise* which flew the flag of the John Jacob Astor fur empire—"a rich man in New York has established a trading-post on the Columbia, naming it Astoria. The Yankees have beaten us to it. Our day of expansion is done."

Tarakanov looked surprised. "But they tell me Kuskov went back to California and founded Fort Ross—"

"It will last a few years, then St. Petersburg will be forced by diplomatic pressure to close it. The Yankees on the Columbia River have driven a wedge between us and California. The cause was lost when you decided to stay on the Ohalat river to look for Anna Petrovna." Baranov spoke without rancor. "Captain Winship wants to hire fifty Aleuts to hunt seal off the Farallones. If he can avoid the Spanish, it should be a profitable summer. You had better go as overseer. You need a good profit, after the last two years."

Tarakanov nodded.

"And don't let me hear of you getting captured by the Spanish," warned Baranov severely. "It is not like living among Indians, that jail at Monterey."

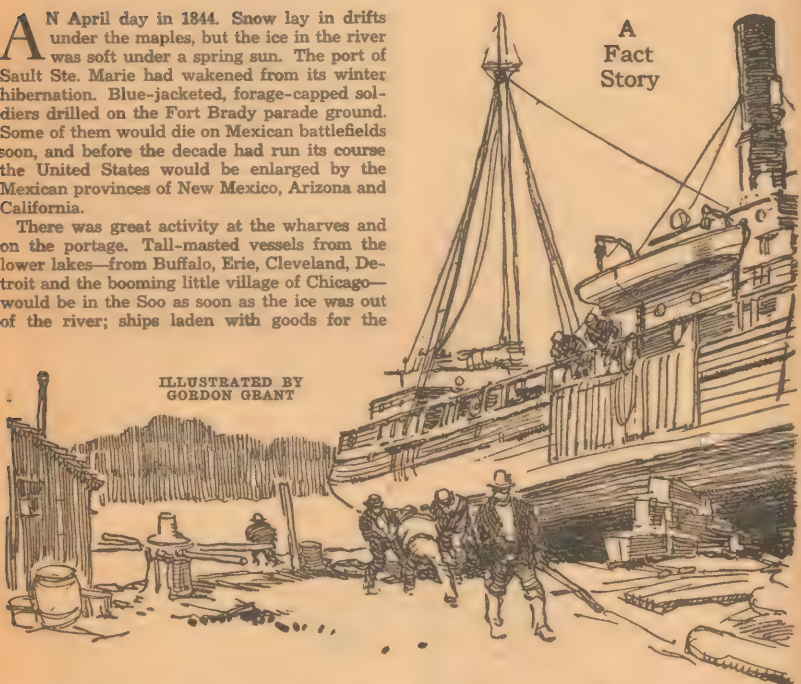
STEAM OVER SUPERIOR

By
R. A. EMBERG

A Fact Story

AN April day in 1844. Snow lay in drifts under the maples, but the ice in the river was soft under a spring sun. The port of Sault Ste. Marie had wakened from its winter hibernation. Blue-jacketed, forage-capped soldiers drilled on the Fort Brady parade ground. Some of them would die on Mexican battlefields soon, and before the decade had run its course the United States would be enlarged by the Mexican provinces of New Mexico, Arizona and California.

There was great activity at the wharves and on the portage. Tall-masted vessels from the lower lakes—from Buffalo, Erie, Cleveland, Detroit and the booming little village of Chicago—would be in the Soo as soon as the ice was out of the river; ships laden with goods for the

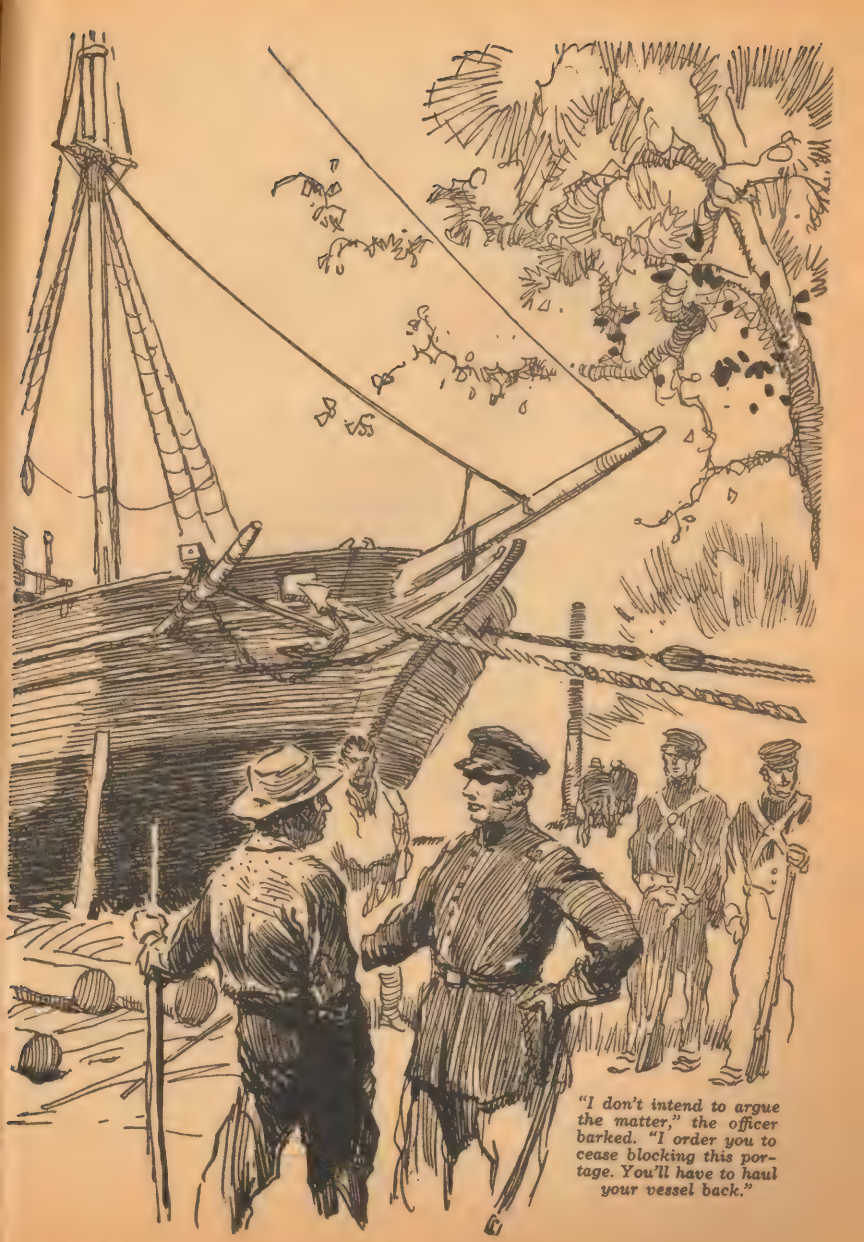


ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

West, for the primitive copper and iron smelters on the Keweenaw Peninsula, for the trappers and the Army posts of the Lake Superior hinterland, and guns, trinkets and firewater for the Indians.

These ships would come up St. Mary's River and moor below the rapids. Then would begin the unloading and portaging of cargo around turbulent white water where Superior poured millions of cubic feet toward Lake Huron.

Above the rapids, frozen in rapidly disintegrating ice, was the Superior fleet, schooners, a brig or two, and large bateaux, into which the portaged freight would be transferred. This fleet was doomed to remain forever on that lake. St. Mary's Rapids was an impassable barrier to interlake navigation. And who cared? Certainly not the Congress of the United States. Even the great statesman, Henry Clay, said in reply to a Michigan senator, who was agitating for a canal and lock to overcome the twenty-foot drop between lake and river, "It is a work quite beyond the remotest settlement of the United States, if not the moon! I intend



"I don't intend to argue the matter," the officer barked. "I order you to cease blocking this portage. You'll have to haul your vessel back."

"Pull out, Averill, if you know what's good for you. Leave Superior to us," snarled Babcock.

to oppose the expenditure of public funds for such a foolish undertaking!"

The offices of the Pacific and Central Lake Steamship Company were beehives this spring morning. Preparations were under way for the huge movement of freight that would ensue within a few days.

Ezra Babcock, as the Soo agent of the Pacific and Central, was the czar of the portage. Pacific and Central also owned the greater part of the Superior fleet. Few vessel owners had the courage to compete with the company, established many years before at Detroit by old Sam Ward and now dominated by old Sam's nephew, Eber Brock Ward, particularly at the Soo and westward over Lake Superior. The Wards looked on the great lake as their private sea. There was little civil law at the Soo beyond that imposed by the Ward interests, and a sister of Ezra Babcock, married to the Fort Brady commandant, gave the company the moral support of the military.

Inside the log administration building at Fort Brady, Lieutenant William Knox, acting quartermaster, fumbled a sheaf of papers and tried to avoid the gaze of the man on the other side of the table.

"I'm sorry, Captain," he said, "but—well—your ship is not quite dependable. It is necessary that communication with Fort Wilkins be maintained—"

Tall, slim Jack Milton Averill, owner and master of the three-masted schooner *Ladybug*, searched the officer's face with frosty blue eyes. "Don't beat about the bush, Knox!" he retorted. "I've hauled your freight now for three years and never a complaint. It's Ezra Babcock. You've had your orders; you're just passing them on."

The quartermaster nodded sheepishly. "I can't do a thing, Milt. The commandant—"

Averill shifted on wide-apart legs. The red of anger crept into his bronzed cheeks. "You might have said something last fall," he said. "I had a chance to sell the *Ladybug* to Hudson's Bay. I could have picked up a ship at Buffalo and stayed on the lower lakes this summer."

"I didn't know," the quartermaster replied. "The old man first mentioned it three weeks ago. Ezra's been putting on pressure."

The red in Averill's cheeks flamed. Without another word he left the office and headed toward the upper river.

On the parade ground he met a thick-set man of about forty-five with a pugnacious chin and a fierce nose. The two stopped and glared at each other.

"I hear you're pulling out of the Superior trade, Cap'n Averill," the thick-set man said with curling lips.

"You've heard dead wrong, Ezra Babcock," Averill snorted. "It'll take more than the Pacific and Central to chase me off Lake Superior. I'm here to stay regardless of what any flunkey of the Wards thinks!"

Babcock's crimson face matched that of Averill. "You—you—" he spluttered. "This is Ward territory. They built up the Soo to what it is—put sails on Lake Superior. Then whippersnappers like you come to horn in! Pull out, Averill, if you know what's good for you. Leave Superior to us."

"If I didn't know the commandant would slam me into the hoosegow, I'd slap you down!" Averill whammed a hard fist into a calloused palm. "When I do that, it won't be on a military reservation. And you'll hear from me again, Ezra Babcock!" Without waiting for the hot retort on Babcock's lips, Averill stamped toward his ship.

The *Ladybug* was berthed at an ice-locked wharf beside several other schooners. Smoke poured from her galley stovepipe and on deck, Clark Miller, mate, shaggy as a Shetland pony, tinkered with coils of running gear.

Clark had wintered on the *Ladybug;* the crew had been paid off the preceding autumn. Averill had spent the winter in Chicago, arriving at the Soo only the day before. The last part of the trip had been made overland from St. Ignace as ice in the straits still held up shipping.

"Babcock's got our contract," Averill told his first mate. The Pacific and Central's frozen us out."

"You mean we don't get the Fort Wilkins cargo?"

"Right. From now on we're on our own. You know what it means to compete with the Ward vessels. Can we pick up enough tonnage to keep going?"

Clark shook his head. "I dunno, Cap'n. Want that I should work this Ezra Babcock over? Mebbe a good lacin'—"

"And get slammed in the Fort Brady guard-

house!" Averill grinned. "No, if I felt that way, I'd do it myself."

"How about the crew?" Clark asked.

"Sign 'em on. We'll pull out when the ice goes. You'd better tell 'em that they're taking a chance on no pay."

BEFORE the season was over, Milt Averill admitted to himself that it was a tough job to buck Ezra Babcock. The *Ladybug* did get a cargo then; but if fate, in the shape of a roaring nor'easter, hadn't beached the big Hudson's Bay tops'l schooner that served the company's post at Fort William, Averill wouldn't have made expenses.

The blow happened in August. Fortunately, the *Ladybug* was snugged down in shelter, and with winter supplies for the Northwest posts piling up on the Canadian side of the river, Hudson's Bay chartered Averill's ship. From then on till ice closed the lake, the *Ladybug* was filled to her hatch covers on both the east and west voyages.

Averill knew that things would be different the next year. He couldn't count on a storm providing him with cargo, nor would the few hauls Ward's ships didn't get keep the schooner in gear, let alone pay wages.

But he wanted to hang on. In a few years the Superior country would provide freight for a thousand times the capacity of every ship now on its waters. Averill didn't guess this; he knew it. Only that summer the barkentine *Columbia* had arrived from the western end of the lake with five barrels of reddish brown dirt aboard. Which wouldn't have meant anything, had the vessel not been carrying a party of Federal geologists, who had themselves scooped up those five barrels. The captain of the *Columbia* after a few glasses of white mule, told Averill that the dirt was iron-ore, richer in pure metallic iron than anything hitherto discovered in America. The whole Minnesota country was lousy with iron.

Nor was that all. In addition to rich silver lodes in the Thunder Bay country on the Canadian side, the prairies west of the Red River would assuredly be settled within a few years. A cascade of golden grain from the buffalo-dung-enriched soil would flow to the Atlantic seaboard, while an equal flood of manufactured goods would move westward. No wonder Pacific and Central Lake wanted Lake Superior for itself.

Averill paid off the crew and talked things over with Clark. "It's coming," he said. "I can see the day when Lake Superior will be open to the lower lakes. Then lighthouses, buoys, channel-marks. Superior will be as safe to navigate as Lake Erie. And tonnage! There won't be enough bottoms to handle it. We've got to hang on."

Averill's glance idly wandered over a small steamer moored near the foot of the rapids. Steamers seldom came to the Soo. Those lordly craft confined themselves to the profitable passenger trade between Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. Even Pacific and Central Lake hauled their Superior-bound freight in sailing vessels. Suddenly an idea flew up and hit him. It could be done providing. . .

Clark was ashore making a round of the grogshops, rounding up the crew—the hardest-fisted seamen, the roughest, toughest canal-boatmen he could find in Buffalo.

Leaving Clark in winter quarters on the *Ladybug*, Averill took the last boat downlakes for Buffalo. He put his proposition up to old Tim Crowley, president of the Mohawk Shipbuilding Company, after he'd inspected that shipyard along with two or three others.

Tim shook his head. "Milt, I'd do almost anything for ye," the one-time Erie Canal laborer told him, "but this, well, ye're crazier'n a loon. Bejabers, 'tis a feat not even Clinton himself would tackle. And if ye succeeded, then what? Ye'd still have the Wards to buck —and a steamer's upkeep'd bust ye entirely."

"Listen, Tim, I'm going to Washington, and here's what I'm going to do—"

Crowley's bushy brows went up as Averill outlined his plans. But he shook his head at the conclusion. "If 'twas only meself, sure

an' I'd do it because ye're a gutty lad. But I'm not the only member of the Crowley firm. There's the stockholders. I can't promise ye a thing, Milt."

The old Irishman seemed loath to conclude the interview. He drummed his desk with a gnarled hand, the same hand that had used pick and shovel in "Clinton's Ditch." "There's the *Independence*," he sighed, "a fine little propeller, two hunnert and fifty tons, but—"

Averill had looked the *Independence* over; in fact, that was why he had come to see Crowley. "How much do you want for her?" he asked.

"Fifty thousand dollars, Milt."

"I have twenty thousand. I'll need five to carry me through the winter and spring and to pay my crew. I'll give you fifteen thousand cash and a note for the balance."

"Your personal note, Milt?"

"No. A lien on the *Ladybug* and the *Independence*. The schooner's worth twenty-five thousand."

"Not to us. We'd have a hell of a time selling her to anyone on Lake Superior, and she's too big to run the rapids."

"I'm sorry, Tim," Averill shrugged his shoulders. He had friends in Chicago who might help. He started for the door. Crowley called him back.

"Milt," he grunted, "I'll back ye meself. To hell with the firm! I got some money o' me own."

AVERILL went to Washington. Congress was in session debating war with Mexico. It had no time to listen to a sailor from Illinois. The weeks dragged on. Finally in March, Averill got an audience with the Secretary of War. Using the argument that the iron and copper deposits of the Superior country were vital war necessities, he got a letter from the Secretary. A few days later he returned to Buffalo in a jubilant frame of mind.

In answer to Averill's summons, Clark Miller arrived in Buffalo and they now signed on a crew for the *Independence*. It wasn't an ordinary crew, but the hardest-fisted seamen, the roughest, toughest canal-boatmen they could find. And there were plenty of them in Buffalo. It wasn't so much sailors Averill wanted, but men who could fight. He got them. Wages double the ordinary and a bonus. Old Tim Crowley was so enthusiastic that he was all for going along himself.

The *Independence* was ready to sail. Clark was ashore making a round of the grog-shops, rounding up the crew. In the stokehold the black-gang stoked the ship's boilers to a full head. Suddenly, with a roar that was heard all over the waterfront, a cloud of steam and debris spewed out of the ship. In the wheelhouse, Averill was knocked flat by the explosion. He didn't have to wait till the offshore breeze had cleared the vapors to know what had happened.

The *Independence* had blown a boiler, killing two firemen and shattering the after end of the craft. When the excitement died down, Averill sadly contemplated the end of his dream. Maybe some day in the future. . .

Old Tim Crowley hotfooted it to the dock. He found Averill clearing up the wreckage. Something in the young skipper's bearing got under Tim's hide. "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, Milt," Crowley said. "We'll put a new b'iler in her. I'm backin' ye to me last cent!"

The *Independence* went onto the stocks in the Crowley yard. She was there nearly all summer. In September she was once more floated and a crew was signed on. It was now a race with winter. Another season would be lost unless the *Independence* made the Soo before ice locked St. Mary's River.

On October 1st, 1845, the *Independence*, her stubby nose pushing a wall of water before her, came up through Hay Lake and the St. Mary's, to tie up at the foot of the Soo portage. Grim-faced men unloaded the equipment littering the steamer's deck—ropes, blocks, and stout wire cables. They placed huge wooden rollers on the shore, and then with the ship's own steam winches began hauling her out of the water.

Sault Ste. Marie was astounded. Everybody in town came to see—and most of them went away scoffing. Sure, a few vessels had been portaged about the rapids—but they were sailing-craft, the largest a hundred-ton schooner, back in 1813. The *Independence* was a steamer, almost three times that tonnage, and she certainly wouldn't hold together with her heavy engines and boilers.

Ezra Babcock was among the onlookers, but Ezra didn't scoff; he knew the temper of Milt Averill too well. Instead, Ezra wrote a long letter to Eber Brock Ward at Detroit and dispatched it downlakes on the first vessel.

Two weeks passed before there was a reply, and when it came it was post-hasted on one of the Ward tugs. The instructions were specific. Under no circumstances was Milt Averill to be permitted to make a successful portage. If there was to be a steamer on Lake Superior, Pacific and Central Lake would furnish it.

This was a poser for Babcock. He didn't know exactly how to go ahead. After all, the portage was public domain; Averill had a legal right to use it.

There was the time-honored way. Ezra made a visit to the *Independence*. Bow on and straightened out, the ship had been hauled along the portage for several hundred yards. Nor did she appear to be falling to pieces as predicted.

"You can't take that vessel through," he told Averill. "Call it off and I'll help you get her

back into the river. If you don't, well, I warned you once about staying away from Superior."

"I'm not looking for trouble," Averill replied, "but I am putting this boat into Lake Superior before snow flies."

"You're blocking the portage—"

"We are not. There's plenty of room."

"You can't buck Pacific and Central Lake, Averill. I'm giving you a chance to back out. That steamer's worth a lot of money. Stay below, man, where you belong!"

"I don't scare, Babcock. And if you try anything, well"—Averill jabbed a thumb at a couple of husky crew members—"we'll take care of ourselves."

"We'll see about that!" Babcock snorted.

Two nights later a dozen men crept down the portage after midnight. A lone watchman was clunked on the head and all of the expensive kedging rigging was thrown into the river.

Luckily, there was some spare equipment aboard the ship. This, together with rigging from the *Ladybug*, served as jury gear and in two days the *Independence* had resumed her westward crawl. The crew was divided into two night watches; each carried rifles and each had orders to shoot.

Another week passed. Then one morning just before daybreak men swarmed over the steamer's side. The *Independence's* watch met them. Belaying-pins and handspikes cracked. Rifle-butts and pistol barrels smacked.

Awakened by the shouts, Averill was on deck in a moment. Grabbing a pin from the nearest pinrail, he dug in at his ship's assailants. He could hear Clark Miller's bellows as the big mate swung with both arms. It was pitch dark and the few lanterns on the topsides had been smashed. There was no way to distinguish friend from foe.

Averill aimed a blow at a thick-set figure. The pin connected with a smack and the man went down. Then suddenly the attackers fled, leaving two prone figures on the *Independence's* deck.

"A light this way," Averill shouted.

"RILEY GRANNAN'S LAST ADVENTURE"

This is the classic of funeral sermons—the sermon delivered in a burlesque theater in Rawhide, Nevada, by Herman W. Knickerbocker, the busted preacher-prospector, over the body of Riley Grannan, the dead-broke gambler.

ADVENTURE has ordered a large reprint of this famous booklet. The price is ten cents.

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Clark Miller succeeded in lighting a lantern. He swung it over the man Averill had knocked out.

"It's Ezra Babcock," Averill said. "I thought the figure looked familiar."

"Damn good riddance if he's kilt," Clark growled.

"It would take a harder clout than the one I gave him to kill Ezra Babcock." Averill pried Babcock's mouth open. "A shot of white mule and he'll be around."

The steward poured the fiery 150-proof water-white liquor into Babcock's mouth. He choked, gurgled, and with a convulsive effort sat up. He was still the uncompromising old man of Lake Superior.

"Well," he growled, "you've got me. What are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know," Averill admitted. "If there were any civil law here, I'd have you arrested. There isn't, however, and I won't get very far with the Fort Brady authorities—"

"Hell, skipper," Clark advised, "crack his head and throw him into the river. He'd do it to you!"

"Over the side," Averill told Babcock. "If you foul me again, I'll try Clark's way."

But Babcock had an ace in the hole. Now that he'd tried unsuccessfully to carry out Eber Brock Ward's instructions, he'd let somebody else do the job up shipshape. He called on the commandant at Fort Brady.

AT ten o'clock next morning, thirty soldiers with bayonetted muskets and a captain with a drawn saber marched from Fort Brady down to the *Independence*. The soldiers clicked to a halt. A knot of bystanders and the ship's crew looked on.

"Are you the master of this ship?" the captain asked Averill.

"Yep, and owner, too," Averill admitted. "Where's the war?"

The Army man was on his dignity immediately. "There may be one here," he snapped. "In the name of the Federal Government I order you to cease blocking this portage. You'll have to haul your ship back—"

"Now just a minute, Captain," Averill replied. "This portage is open to all American citizens, and it is not blocked. There is ample room on the right for the regular traffic."

"I don't intend to argue the matter with you," the Army officer barked. "You can't haul that vessel another foot."

"Go ahead with the work," Averill told his men. "We are within our rights. They can't stop us."

A sailor lugged a block trailing slack rope to a tree. The captain snapped a command and a squad of soldiers stepped out of the ranks.

Averill placed himself in front of the sailor.

"Arrest that man—arrest both of them!" the captain ordered, pointing his sword. "We'll teach them to defy the United States Army!"

"Just wait a moment—" Averill's hand was in a coat-pocket. "Before you do anything you'd better read this. I got it in Washington, from the Secretary of War, for just such an emergency as this." He handed the captain a document.

With a frown the captain tucked the saber under his arm. His brows went up as he read. "Why didn't you give this to me in the first place?" he demanded querulously. "Why didn't you show it to the commandant?"

"I was crossing my bridges when I came to them," Averill replied curtly. "Now if you'll take your army away we'll continue."

The captain marched his men back to the fort followed by raucous comments from the ship's crew. The captain's face was very red.

When word came to Ezra Babcock of the defeat of the soldiery, he hotfooted it to the fort. "How come?" he stormed at the commandant.

"We can't do a thing." The commandant shook his head. "That fellow's smart, Ezra. He has a letter from the Secretary of War telling the military authoriites at Fort Brady to give him full cooperation in getting his ship into Lake Superior. And he didn't show it until it was too late for you to get in touch with Mr. Ward, and for him to get in touch with Washington. And you'd better go easy with—well—the rough stuff. This fellow Averill—well, damn it, he's under my protection! I have my commission to look out for."

Eight weeks after the first lines were thrown ashore, the *Independence* was hauled the last yard of her overland voyage. Her seams started by the terrific strains were calked, and a day later she was kedged into the upper river. Bystanders cheered lustily as her stern floated free of the mud.

It was late, and ice could be expected at any time. But Averill, confident that she could push her way through the first light ice, headed westward to Copper Harbor for a trial cruise. He cut the running time of the *Ladybug* by half.

On the return to the Soo, the crew was paid off, and the ship went into winter quarters. Clark Miller, as usual, would be shipkeeper.

There was a sparkle in Averill's eyes as he shook hands with his mate before taking the last boat to Buffalo.

"I'll be in early in the spring," he said. "There's something else that Babcock and the commandant don't know. In the spring all hauling of military cargo and all transportation of U. S. mail and official communications will be opened to competitive bidding. And speed will be a prime factor. We can cut Pacific and Central Lake's lowest bid and still make out. Then it will be hay while the sun shines. There'll be a half-dozen steamers up here inside two years."

Backhouse Battleship

A Fact Story

By

CARL D. LANE

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

The black monster drifted silently, not deigning to return the Confederate fire.

THE month of February 1863 was a disastrous one for the Union forces attempting to capture the strategic city of Vicksburg. In an effort to destroy the supply boats of the Red River from whence came the sinews of war to the Vicksburg garrison, Admiral Porter lost the powerful ironclad *Indianola* and Colonel Ellet the formidable steam-ram *Queen of the West*. Though both boats had been damaged by Confederate fire in passing the Vicksburg batteries and by the separate engagements they fought, the Confederates managed to beach them and immediately commenced upon their repair.

The situation looked black indeed to the besieging forces. With these two mighty craft added to the Confederate fleet bottled between Porter to the north and Admiral Farragut's Gulf Blockade Fleet to the south, there was a good chance that the South could drive both Union fleets and the armies which depended upon them far up and down the river from Vicksburg. What saved the situation was not a plan of the war lords. No official documents passed relative to the matter; it is doubtful that either Porter or Farragut knew of the "Backhouse Battleship" until after her epic voyage. What saved the day was a seaman's prank, springing from the Yankee's urgent necessity to laugh in the blackest of hours.

Above Vicksburg some of Porter's seamen, no doubt bored by the endless swamps of the Yazoo, the droning mosquitoes and the lack of honest Yankee liquor, passed an afternoon in

constructing what the Southern *press* called "The Turreted Monster." The craft was a dummy ironclad gunboat—the only gunboat never on the naval lists. For the hull these tars used an abandoned and crippled coal barge. In the dank bayou, screened from the fleet, each man contributed an item or two to the craft. Over a rough framework of timber they laid swamp reeds. Short logs served as the guns, double-rowed and encircling the vessel. The twin stacks were simulated by shafts of molasses barrels. Spars, masks for the paddles, 'scape pipes were easy—but some unsung genius solved the problem of the wheelhouse on the texas. From a Negro's hut nearby this Yazoo Lord Nelson dragged a simple little outbuilding—a jake, billy, dooley, biffie, donnicker: a backhouse. The monster was complete. All that was needed was a dark night—and how the Union boys would roar as they huddled 'round their camp-fires!

On the night of February twenty-fifth, the craft was pushed gently into the current. In the approved manner—silent and dark—she drifted down toward the endless water batteries before Vicksburg. Within a few moments the alert sentry on the northern levee called his corporal. They studied the strange black shadow in the river and the alarm flashed. All down the batteries the signal lights blinked, sleepy gun crews were turned out, powder bags passed up from the earthen caverns and the whisper of the passing of the giant Federal gunboat ran from the meanest trench to the tent of General Stevenson.

Gun after gun opened upon the formidable craft. All down the water batteries gunners squinted at the strange black monster which did not deign to return their fire. The quiet night was ripped by the thunder of a thousand guns, stabbed by the spitting red fire of the Confederate's best. But the monster drifted silently downstream. And as it passed the last fort and the gunfire died, General Stevenson belatedly "understood" the meaning of his failure to stop the huge invincible vessel: The Yankees must have sent their best and most powerful gunboat to the rescue of the *Indianola* and the *Queen of the West.*

From his tent a half-dressed adjutant left upon the swiftest horse in Vicksburg. He carried, in writing, the general's orders to the details engaged in raising the *Indianola* and repairing the *Queen:* "Destroy both vessels at once . . . you haven't a chance against the turreted monster which defied the batteries of Vicksburg!"

In haste the *Indianola* was blown to bits. The *Queen,* burning her own furniture under her boilers and with less than half her crew on board, waddled frantically for the upper reaches of the Red River . . . and on her way spread the dread news of the raider and sent the Confederate fleet into the remotest swamps in panic.

At Warrenton, below Vicksburg, the Confederate batteries destroyed the monster and discovered her true character. But it was too late for General Stevenson's order to be countermanded. The "Backhouse Battleship" had accomplished her accidental military mission.

A small building with a gracefully cut-out half-moon decoration floated downstream to Admiral Farragut's wardogs . . . and Vicksburg from the Yazoo to the Gulf was surrounded by a force as powerful as all the Union cannon—a hearty Yankee belly-laugh.

Plan to join Mr. Maddox on the Murder Limited,

THE SOONER THE DEADER

and get the lowdown on the big man's trip to sunny Florida and the scared kid who stumbled into his berth crying: "I'm afraid! I've been afraid for so long. . ." Could she have anticipated the wreck or was she terrified of something else? Find the answers in this latest of the ever popular series by

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This killer was all set to create his own "Killed in Action" roster, but the fall-gal for the murders had her own idea of justice and began bombarding the *Recorder's* Lora Lorne column with the awful truth. She almost succeeded in adding her name to the obit columns except that Miss Lorne was a six-foot hunk of man named Bill Brent who could take care of a lady in distress—and did! The newest doings of your favorite snoop-hound by

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DIME DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

May issue on sale today.

(Continued from page 8)

DOW RICHARDSON, a Kokomo, Indiana, newspaperman (*The Kokomo Tribune*), has had verse published in the *Saturday Evening Post, Judge*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Country Gentleman* and various other places. Of his poem in this issue Mr. Richardson says—

"Salute to a New Star" celebrates the famous American cruiser *San Francisco* which led a fleet into battle off Guadalcanal against much heavier Japanese men-of-war, confounding the enemy by steaming between two lines of his ships, and routing him. Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan, close friend and former naval aide of President Roosevelt, was killed in the engagement. The American maneuver was one of the oldest and most dangerous in naval warfare. Lord Nelson used it at Trafalgar to gain a great victory over the French. The Americans ran the gauntlet of Jap ships, firing broadsides in both directions. They closed to a range of 2,000 yards —"pistol range," one officer called it—the *San Francisco* scoring eighteen hits on the leading Jap battleship which was finished off later by our destroyers. The action of the Americans so confused the Japanese that they began firing at each other. Before the *San Francisco* finished, she smashed two other ships, sinking one.

WHO ever said that paternity didn't have pitfalls! And the writing profession, too. Witness the following from Commander Bosworth—

"The Steamboat Breed" cost me money. The original idea belonged to my eighteen-year-old son Jim—who will be in the Navy himself very soon—and he was wrestling with what appeared to be an epic poem based upon this theme. With the rash largesse characteristic of all bankrupt magazine writers, I offered him $10 on the line for the idea and he later produced witnesses to the effect that I also mouthed something about one-third of the ultimate price. The final outcome, I'm afraid, will have a marked effect on his life—he now has the notion that literary income comes easy.

TO "Steam over Superior" R. A. Emberg adds the following historical footnote material, as interesting in many ways as the story of the *Independence* itself—

The need of a canal to connect Lake Superior with the lower lakes was recognized early by progressive members of the Michigan Legislature. As early as 1837 an act was passed by the legislature authorizing construction of locks that would accommodate medium-size sailing vessels. In September, 1838, the Canal Commission, on behalf of the State, entered into a contract with Smith and Driggs of Buffalo, New York, for the construction of the upper level of the canal. There was a lot of financial monkey-business, farming out of sub-contracts, etc., including the pooling of a vessel, the *Eliza Ward*, either a brig or a schooner, for which the owner, a Mr. Weeks (a henchman of Eber Brock Ward) received a nice slice of pie.

But before the work could be started, the commandant at Fort Brady, Brevet Major Root, informed the state authorities that a canal would damage a mill-race that delivered water to a grist-mill owned by the Federal Government which was used to grind meal for the garrison and Indian wards, and that such construction would not be tolerated. A quote from his communication: "You will therefore apprise the contractor that he cannot be allowed in the execution of his contract to interfere in any way with our mill-race."

The State ordered the contractor to go ahead (States Rights were, in those days, at least, a debatable question). The crisis came on May 13, 1839. The contractor set his men to work and a Captain Johnson of Fort Brady, with thirty regulars with muskets and bayonets, ordered the work stopped. James Sherrill, the foreman, told the captain where to go, whereupon the captain let loose his men, driving the contractor and his gang from the scene. And thus ended the first attempt at putting a canal between Superior and the lower lakes.

In 1840 a bill was introduced in the National Congress, authorizing a canal to be constructed with Federal funds. Henry Clay was instrumental in defeating this bill with his ". . . . it is a work quite beyond the remotest settlement in the United States, if not the moon. . . ."

But they couldn't stop it. In 1852 the Federal Government issued a land-grant to the State of Michigan for 750,000 acres of land for the canal construction. After its completion it was under State control until 1881. When Congress declared the Great Lakes to be "High Seas," the Federal Government took over the Canal.

Now a note about tonnage. In 1845 about twelve thousand tons of freight went over the mile-portage. This year over one hundred million net tons will flow through it. A lot of tonnage. Look at it this way. It's equivalent to ten thousand steamers carrying ten thousand-ton cargoes each. Yep, a pretty busy ditch. And the Soo Chamber of Commerce is absolutely correct when they term it THE GREATEST WATERWAY IN THE WORLD.

In all, seven steamers, six besides the *Independence*—the *Julia Palmer*, the *Baltimore*, the *Sam Ward*, the *Manhattan*, the *Monticello* and the *Peninsular*—were portaged into Lake Superior around the Sault Ste. Marie Rapids before the way was opened by the Soo Canal in 1855. But the old *Independence* never saw the new canal, never passed through it to the sweetwater seas below Superior. On November 22nd, 1853, she was destroyed by a boiler explosion with the loss of four men. Thus the first steamer on Lake Superior also furnished the first steamship disaster on that lake.

The Wards occupied about the same position for years on the Lakes that the Dollar family did out on the Pacific Coast. Cap'n Sam Ward was a New Englander, left there right after the War of 1812, and came to the Ohio Coast of Lake Erie. He built a small schooner and began trading on the three middle lakes, Erie, Huron and Michigan. For several years he carried on this trade, much after the fashion of the South Sea traders of the late 90's, that is, he owned his own vessel.

stocked his own trade goods, and traded in the frontier country adjacent to the three Great Lakes mentioned above. He became quite a character, generous, openhanded and a great hand with good whiskey. But above all, he had Yankee shrewdness. He discovered fire-clay (brick clay) along the St. Clair River and made a lot of money out of it. In fact, Cap'n Sam was the founder of Marine City, Mich., now the winter home of most of the Great Lakes licensed officers. Later on he became interested in the budding steamship business and was associated with most of the steamship interests of those early days. So much for Sam Ward. Oh, I forgot, Cap'n Sam was getting on in years when the Erie Canal was completed, but just to show the folks that he was still young, he built a small schooner with hinged top-hamper, sailed her from Detroit to Buffalo, and down the Erie Canal to Albany, and thence to New York City.

And now, enter the villain in the form of Eber Brock Ward, a nephew of Cap'n Sam. He had all of Cap's shrewdness, but little of his geniality or generosity. He was one of the early go-getter businessmen, and he let nothing stand in his way. Within a few years he was running the Ward companies (there were a half-dozen by that time) lock, stock and barrel. Cap'n Sam was a sort of emeritus.

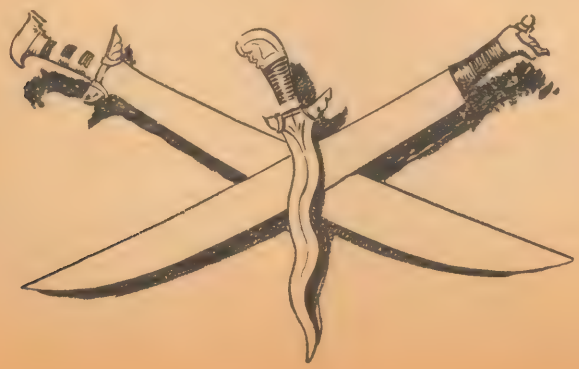
One of the Ward companies was The Pacific and Central Lake Steamship Company, and it had damn near a monopoly on shipping on the lakes for a time. Another company was the ancestor of the present Illinois Steel Company. Eber Brock Ward didn't stick to shipping exclusively. With both feet he got into everything —lumber, copper, iron—and for a time he was the big boss of the Pere Marquette Railroad.

In some respects, "Steam Over Superior" is a composite. I don't know the true story; I doubt if anyone does. I do know this: J. M. Averill, a young lake captain, brought the *Independence*, a two-hundred-and-fifty ton (some accounts say she was 360 tons) propellor (screw steamer) to the Soo in the autumn of 1845, and after a hell of a time, finally launched her into Lake Superior. I've sifted quite a lot of material and I know that much for certain. And it's equally certain he had trouble with the Ward interests who bossed the whole country. There is another account of the *Independence's* overland journey, and that is, she was hauled out on *keel blocks*, and then skidded on a deep fall of snow by one hundred oxen. I prefer the account as given in my story. I mentioned another ship in the yarn, the brigantine *Columbia*. She too, is authentic. Yes, there was an acting quartermaster at Fort Brady at that time whose name was Knox. As for the interference by the military—well, I do know that the commandant at Fort Brady, presumably at the instigation of the Wards (Eber Brock Ward) actually set at naught (defied) the state authorities of Michigan when they tried to construct the first canal there, and placed under military arrest a party of laborers and their foremen. The digging of the canal was delayed about ten years by this arbitrary action, so I don't think I missed it much by assuming that Averill also had the military to consider.

Yes, Averill had trouble, a lot of trouble, but he did get his ship into Superior. She blew up in 1853 or sometime about then. I don't have my references up here with me or I'd give you the exact date. *Ladybug* is fictitious, but Averill was a windjammer man, though I could never discover the names of the sailing vessels he commanded.

"Ice," another story of the Great Lakes by Mr. Emberg, is scheduled for publication soon.

WE thought you might be interested in the following example of cooperation between an author and artist. When Mr. Kramer started to draw the illustrations for "Sign of Fire," he discovered that while he had innumerable pictures of *krises* and *kampilans* there wasn't a *barong* in his collection for modeling purposes. We promptly put the problem up to Author Price who not only post-hasted a photograph of the weapon but also sent the following description of the lethal instrument—



The blade is a shade less than 14 inches long. Its breadth at the widest part is practically 2½ inches. Right at the grip, the back of the blade is ¼ inch thick, and tapers in thickness so that about 1 inch from the point, the metal is less than 1/10 inch thick. The metal binding on the grip is seamed brass tubing, neatly swaged or tapered; seam-soldered or silver-soldered. Better specimens have all silver ferrule and binding. The carved pommel is a conventional shape, apparently fixed by tradition. The wood is hard, lustrous, golden brown, with pale veining, and has a dark brown heart; every specimen I have ever seen has had a grip made of this same wood. Whether this (as far as I know) consistent choice of wood is based on tradition, availability or utility, I can't say. Other woods must be available, and should certainly be as useful for the purpose. The *kampilan*, Mindanao's classic snickersnee, seems always to have a grip of black wood, the so-called "Philippine ebony."

Some *barongs* have a blade as long as 15-16 inches. The blade contour is unvarying, whereas the *kris* blade occurs in a considerable number of variations. Many a kris has a grip too small for the normal Anglo-Saxon hand; the *barong*, on the other hand, has plenty of grip for anyone wearing a ⅞-⅞9 glove.

You hear a good many legends about the excellence of the metal used in Malay blades. This is largely overdrawn. Some undoubtedly are superlative, whereas some, I have observed, are quite soft, and need constant honing to keep them at peak performance.

Even if you were as fuzzy as we were about the *barong*, it should be clear as a bell now. It is to Artist Kramer—at least he says it is—for he claims the *barongs* he now depicts would suit even the most critical Mindanao native who ever went *juramentado*.

WITH his third Crazy McIntosh story, "Paved with Good Intentions," Keith Edgar breaks down and confesses that the railroad on which he cheerfully admits he was "the world's worst brakeman," and about which he writes, is the Canadian division of the Wabash, running between Windsor and Buffalo or Niagara Falls on a shortcut to the coast. Ex-brakeman Edgar writes—

At the time I worked on it, they advertised the fastest freight service in the world. Unfortunately, the trains always seemed to arrive at the border a couple of hours late, so once in Canada they broke them up into comparatively short trains—55 or 60 cars—and ran them on fast schedule with passenger engines, if these were available. Or they'd hook a big freight hog on and clear them through as an "extra," letting the hogger make all the time he could.

The engine crews were a bunch of old-timers who were bitter rivals as regards their running times, and when it was a case of going by the rule book and arriving late, they tossed the book out the cab window and just pounded her stack, knowing that the super would shut his eyes—providing there were no accidents. It is an excellent tribute to these men that accidents were extremely rare. My father was one of the crack engineers and hung up some speed records that have never been equaled, and he was quite a character.

I was riding with him one time when we were cleared out of Windsor only twenty minutes ahead of the International Limited. Of course it is a heinous crime to hold the Limited up and we were supposed to just get out of town and pull into the first siding to let her go by. But Dad was in a hurry to get home and he had a big "2400" hog, so he settled down to getting there ahead of the passenger. By the time we were at Belle River, we learned that she was ten minutes late, so Dad digs out her time card and decides to run on *it*. Of course the Limited is trying to make up time and when we cannonball into Chatham she is heaving into sight behind us, with the uneasy conductor throwing the air on from the rear end and Dad pumping it in as fast as the rear end lets it out. The air in the cab by this time is blue, as Dad don't like working the air pumps so much. When we hit a long curve, my job is to look back along the train for hot boxes, but something is the matter with my eyesight as I can't see the conductor frantically flagging us down from the caboose. Neither can Dad or the fireman. The conductor is waving a hunk of newspaper, as this has the highest visibility. Well, we pull in ahead of the hotshot without holding her up and everybody is congratulating Dad on a record run when the conductor puffs up mad as hell. "Hey!" says he indignantly. "Didn't you see me waving that newspaper at ya?"

"Cripes," says Dad, "you ought to know I can't read a paper from that distance. Besides, I was busy driving this train. What was the item you wanted to show me?"

Incidentally, I shouldn't be telling you this except for so much per word. Better not publish it as I may use the incident. (We guess we're safe now since that we inherited the "incident" along with P.W.G.I.—Ed.)

A sidelight on the McIntosh stories is that my mother has practically disowned me. Having no sense of humour, she says, "What right have you to make a hero of *yourself*? And what do you mean by making fun of us all? Who wants to read that stuff anyway? You know it is very much exaggerated!" Ah, fame.

By the way, I did not use my father as a model for Crazy McIntosh. He is more of a composite of several hoggers I knew, though Dad is there too. But he did not chew tobacco—he smoked an awful old corncob pipe—and legend has it that his engine never would run properly until the pipe was steaming good first. But—back to the division—for some miles our track paralleled the New York Central, and some of our hoggers would think nothing of racing a crack flyer if she came along. They never won, but they always tried. This made for an interesting ride, as our roadbed just along there was pretty lousy and you got the decided impression of being in a small boat during a Lake Erie storm when the hogs started to travel. But as for the Central's freights—ha!—we always zipped past

them with a sneer and a merry ha-ha, our fireman slugging his heart out while their fireman on his stoker-equipped Hudson-type watched us with envy in his heart.

The unwritten rule was—get the damn train through regardless of the rule book, but DON'T have any accidents or you'll be fired. It made for an interesting life.

You may be interested in some repercussions on the Canadian publication of my "Heroes Are Made" (*Adventure's* American edition of July '43) which appeared in the December issue over here. The St. Thomas paper ran a piece about it (so they tell me—I didn't see it) and there was a run on the magazine.

Several people asked my dad and mother who was this "Peggy" that I was in love with at the time, and numerous old-timers are claiming to be the original of "Crazy McIntosh." (No one is claiming to be Dirty Dolan.)

The dispatcher at Hamilton sent the story to the dispatcher at St. Thomas, giving him the raspberry for letting such things happen on the division, and the dispatcher went to Dad asking in an aggrieved tone why I had to write about *his* RR. All this in spite of the fact that I did not at any place in the story name the railroad.

The superintendent (retired) made a point of calling Dad up and telling him that never at any time did he bawl me out when I should have been praised. (Ha, ha!)

Mr. Edgar, who is, incidentally, associate editor of *Maclean's Magazine* in Toronto now, having forsaken the brakeman's lantern for a brighter light, tells us he confidently expects further maledictions to be heaped on his head as more Crazy McIntosh stories appear. We're afraid he's got to grin and bear it, however, for we intend to keep Crazy highballing for a while yet and don't want the old coot to reach end of steel till a good many more miles have been covered.

WE found the following correspondence from G. E. Niver of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Thomson Burtis, author of "The War of the Wildcats," extremely interesting, not only because of the personalities involved but for the way it reveals how a skillful fiction writer uses an authentic factual background to make his story and characters come alive. Witness—

Dear Sir:—I found Thomson Burtis' story in the December 10th issue extremely interesting and enjoyed it very much. However, I am wondering if the incidents upon which it is based did not occur in Mexico instead of Oklahoma, and around 1921-22 instead of before World War I.

I went to Tampico in June of 1919, immediately after my discharge from the Army in 1919 after a year in France with the Infantry of the 28th Division. Eventually I wound up as a tool dresser on cable tools in the drilling department of an oil company, working in the "lower field" between Los Naranjos and Toteca during the peak days of the fabulous "Tampico Boom."

Unless I am badly mistaken, the Monte Mathews of the story is taken from Monte Michaels, who was later killed at Panuco in the feud described in the story. Michaels did acquire leases from the Indians, he did drill a well outside of Zacamixtle, the pipe lines did refuse to handle his oil. However, he did not blow up the pipe lines—instead, he and his men took to holding up camps and narrow-gage trains for the payrolls. They did blow up a train with about $80,000 in gold on board, killing the entire armed guard but one, who played "possum" and identified them. The payroll belonged to the company for which I worked and our camps were their target. During one week our boys formed a skirmish line three different nights and chased them out of camp.

It is also my belief that the well on fire as described by Mr. Burtis occurred in a section of the field known as Amatlan. If this is the case it was a well being drilled independently by a group of individuals. As a tool-dresser I worked out an interest in it, trading three months' work for 1½ percent interest. (I obtained a furlough from the venture).

Actually, there were two wells on fire, one of an estimated capacity of 30,000 barrels and one of 50,000 barrels daily production. Oil did run down an arroyo and catch fire but was dammed by an earthen dike erected a week or so earlier.

The water line to the well was laid as described in Mr. Burtis' story and water was sprinkled on the crews as they put the line together. However, there was a slight difference: the shields were made of sheet iron nailed to

wooden frames and were placed ahead of crews making up the line. I helped lay this water line.

The fires were put out as described a day or two after water line was laid, the cast iron valve did hold and the air was cooler close in to the well itself. This I did not see, as I was in bed with an attack of malaria, but I knew the men who put the fire out.

Furthermore, one of Monte Michaels' men actually went by the name of Dick Richards; while he had never been a Texas Ranger, he certainly attempted to dress and act like one. I also believe he was the one who actually operated in both organizations.

There appear to be too many coinciding features to be accidental, so I am wondering if Mr. Burtis was in Tampico during those days. If he was not, he certainly must have obtained his basic data from someone who was. It was an interesting story and Tampico in those days was quite a place.

We forwarded Mr. Niver's letter to the author in California who answered thuswise—

My dear Mr. Niver:—

Your letter is positively uncanny. Half of it hits the actual nail squarely on the head. So does the other half, except that the second half would seem to indicate that I'm psychic or something. Or possibly the subconscious has to take a deep bow. That is, I may have heard the tale of the double fire you mention, and forgotten that I heard it, and thought I was inventing some of the incidents in "War of the Wildcats."

Monte Mathews *was* taken from Monte Michaels. I was in and around the Tampico oilfields directly after I resigned from the Army Air Service, in 1923 or thereabouts. I went into the whole story of Monte Michaels very carefully. My principal source of information, as I remember it, was Kid Moore, who with his son formed a famous pair of drillers. It is almost unquestionably true that I learned about the method of putting out a fire, the fact that the air is cooler close to the well, etc., from men who told me of the fire you describe. I tried hard to learn the oil business (I was sort of sponsored by the Texas Co. bunch) and I am more than delighted that after all these years an expert like yourself found the stuff true to life, technically correct, and interesting.

Here is the amazing thing. So far as I was conscious (if I ever am), my design of the fire in the story was pure imagination. I put it on a hill in order to increase the drama of it and allow scope for incident. Also I give you my word that the idea of holding protection over their heads to save them from a rain of hot oil I thought I had invented myself!

There would seem to be no question, however, that the famous fires you mention must have been described in great detail to me during my stay down there, and I just dredged the details out of my subconscious without being aware of it. So, after all these years, you get a fiction picture of one of the events in your own career exact beyond even the author's knowing.

As for Richardson, that is the right name of the character I really met working for Texas at Quebrache, fifty miles south of Tampico. By arrangement with him, and as a gag he liked, I used to use him by name in stories years ago. So far as I know, this Richardson was a real ex-Ranger, was highly thought of, and became my closest companion down there. I liked him thoroughly, and doubt whether he would play two sides of the fence for the wrong motives. He gave me some hints that he was getting certain information, too. Perhaps my man was undercover for the Immigration Service or others of the many government offices which find it wise to have trained citizens collect intelligence

(Continued on page 143)

"Have Reason to Believe Bad Crime in Town.

Am forwarding bottle of sawdust to be analyzed by you," read the cryptic little note which dispatched Luther McGavock post-haste to Kempton, Tenn. Delightful place—with "you-all's" thick on everyone's lips and murder on everyone's mind—McGavock's particularly! The latest in the ever-popular series by MERLE CONSTINER, *The Hound With the Golden Eye.*

In *The Corpse Pays Cash,* D. L. CHAMPION brings back Rex Sackler, the penny-pinching private peep, and his hapless stooge, Joey, to ferret out the heir-remover who's playing havoc with the Pawling clan. Sackler, of course, comes out decidedly on the black-ink side of the ledger, and, wonder of wonders! little Joey ends up, for the first time in his life, with $500 of his own—and all because of a frilly bedjacket!

BLACK MASK

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ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

A "LOST ART" that probably never existed.

Query:—What can you tell me about the so-called lost secret of hardening copper?

—Lester C. Simons
122 Joralemon St.
Brooklyn 2, New York

Reply by Victor Shaw:—My studied opinion is that the so-called "lost art" of tempering copper belongs to the ancient period of alchemy, necromancy, and the sacred (magic) arts. But so far as I've been able to discover it has no factual possibility. Rather, I think it'd be more properly classed with such delusions as the divining rod, transmutation of metals, and Philosopher's Stone.

Further, it is discredited by modern science even as a remote possibility, as it doesn't conform to established principles of the chemistry of metals and their interaction, by which is obtained the hardening of steel known as "tempering." It is a pet theory of mine that perhaps this "lost art" idea may stem from a misconception, coupled maybe with ignorance of chemical reactions touching both iron and copper, and that such misconception could derive from incidents similar to one recorded in the early history of Lake Superior copper deposits, viz:

One of these—whether Calumet & Hecla or not, I've forgotten—was found to have been worked before, probably in very ancient times. In fact a huge lump of pure native copper rested in one tunnel, obviously too big to be moved by primitive methods. Also, and here's my point, various mining tools were found including drills that were not iron or steel, but pure copper.

This was many years before our mining men knew about the chemical action in rich copper deposits, wherein acids existing oxidize away all iron so that each iron atom is replaced by an atom of pure copper. Hence it is quite conceivable that finding the aforementioned copper tools, the story might have started that the tools were of tempered copper, but their temper was gradually lost through natural causes in the course of time. Of course, I refer to the general public idea now, not conclusions by metallurgists. Just theory, but it does seem rather plausible, at least to me.

AN ALL-PURPOSE knife for a sailor.

Request:—I recently discussed with a friend of mine the type of knife to carry for emergency use under certain hypothetical conditions. Inasmuch as the available choice is so large, he suggested that I write *Adventure*, in order to use the large source material available. I do not know whether your department, or Captain Gardner's (swords) would be better fitted to answer, but I am submitting the case to you first.

Suppose you were a sailor on a man-of-war in the Pacific. You are obliged to abandon ship in a hurry, an action you have partly anticipated by carrying a knife for emergency use (description to be suggested by you). Following the sinking of the ship, unfortunately with all hands except yourself, you embark in a life raft which has a limited amount of food, and some fishing equipment. After several days, you drift ashore on an island of tropical type, with a few small streams containing fish, a rocky or coral beach with various types of crustaceans, and the possibility of meeting one or two Jap scouts from an encampment on the other side of the island. Your problem is to exist for a few days until rescued by friendly natives or a passing plane.

Here I would like to make a few notations: (a.) If you have been carrying the knife constantly, it must have been of a reasonably small

size in order not to be too heavy nor to get in the way. (b.) You are a sailor, and presumably have no pockets in your trousers, so the knife is some form of sheath knife, even if it is folding. (c.) In abandoning ship, you may have to cut loose the life raft, or may have had to cut yourself free from entangling lines. (d.) While in the life raft, you may have caught fish and have needed a knife to skin, scrape, or clean the fish. In addition, your can opener, for your emergency rations, may have become lost or broken, and you may have had to use the knife for this purpose. (e.) On the beach, your knife becomes a jack of all trades from prying mussels off the rocks, to building a palm covered lean-to. It also will be useful as a hunting knife for such animals as may be snared. Finally, it may be your only defense against a Jap who has discovered your camp but has not yet been able to raise the alarm.

Now the questions: (a.) What type of knife? (Hunting, fishing, bowie, Finnish dirk, bolo, short brush knife, etc.) (b.) What weight? (c.) What blade length? (d.) What blade width? (e) What edge type? (Bevel, wedge ground, hollow ground) (f.) How many edges? (g.) With or without guard? (If guard, what type?) (h.) What kind of handle? (Wood, plastic, metal, composite) (i.) Where balanced longitudinally? (Blade or handle heavy) (j.) Where balanced transversely? (Edge or back heavy) (k.) What kind of sheath? (Belt, calf, or back neck).

—L. T. Morse
Lieut. Comdr. USN
Naval Receiving Station
Newport News, Va.

Reply by Paul M. Fink:—By strange coincidence, just two weeks to the day before your letter arrived, I outfitted one of my camping companions with a knife. He—a torpedo plane pilot bound for the South Pacific—wanted a blade for just such purposes as you outlined. The one I gave him would be hard to duplicate today, for it was brought back from Germany by my brother, who served in the Army of Occupation on the Rhine in 1918-19. I get a great kick from the thought that this Boche steel will be turned against their Nipponese allies.

It will be hard to find a single knife that will do all the things you want. If it is small enough to carry on the person at all times it will hardly be heavy enough to do much chopping in building you a lean-to, and after you use it to open a few cans it won't be at its best to assist a wandering Jap to greet his ancestors in the spirit world.

While I know that the sailor's uniform isn't very abundantly supplied with pockets, could not the man in question find room to carry a pocket knife? If so, I'd suggest that he outfit himself first with something like the Boy Scout knife, which has, in addition to its blade, a can opener, a screwdriver (use that for opening the oysters, etc.) and a punch that would find a myriad of uses for a castaway.

For his heavier armament, I'd prefer a sheath knife with about a 4¾- or 5-inch blade, like the knives that used to be put out by Marble, Remington, the regular hunting knife pattern. With this he could kill any animals that might be trapped, even if it had to be lashed to a pole to make a lance to deliver the finishing touch; game and fish could be dressed, kindling and small poles cut and all general camping chores cared for. And if needed for personal defense (or offense) it will be as deadly a small weapon as one could ask for.

How to carry it is somewhat a matter of personal preference, and also may be influenced by conditions at the moment. My own choice is in a leather sheath at the belt, not to the front, as you often see, but rather on the starboard quarter. There it can be easily reached in a jiffy, is out of the way at other times, and there is no danger of one bending forward suddenly and driving the point of his own knife into his thigh. If you can fashion a point protector from a bit of copper to fit inside the tip of the sheath it will be of great value.

Of course, even a knife of this size will be of little use in trying to cut one's way through dense jungle growth, but only a bolo, machete or brush knife will do much of this, and they are manifestly too big to be carried on the person at all times.

As I said in the beginning, no one knife will be entirely suitable for all the things you named, and the combination of the two described is the best I can see, under the circumstances. If you have to be content with a single one, get the hunting knife and guard its edge carefully. Remember, a knife is made for cutting. Too much prizing may break a blade and leave you helpless, and opening tin cans will nick and turn an edge so that any kind of cutting thereafter will be difficult.

Any kind of hunting knives are hard, if not almost impossible to get now. If they are missing from the stores, or if someone tries to hold you up for an exorbitant price, as they did my friend, 'most any ship will have in its complement a machinist's mate or blacksmith who can make a fine, sturdy knife from a worn-out file.

Draw the temper, shape the blade on a grinding wheel and retemper. Leave a tang long enough for the hilt, and make this of leather or fiber disks driven on, then shaped to fit the hand. Hold these in place with a brass or aluminum knob, threaded to screw onto the end of the tang.

Here's hoping that you can find a knife to fill your needs, and that you will never need to use it in emergency.

TRAPPING is tough in Saskatchewan—on rabbits as well as men.

Query:—Where can I get information in regard to purchasing land in Saskatchewan? Could a man with not very much experience make a living for self and wife by trapping there? What sections are least settled and have most fur-bearing animals? If I could buy land there, what would you say would be the most feasible way of making a living? I would like to trap in the winter. Would raising Angora rabbits there be a profitable enterprise?

—Jerome Bukema
1033 Van Ness
Fresno, Calif.

Reply by H. S. M. Kemp:—Your letter regarding trapping and purchasing land in Saskatchewan raises one or two points. The first would concern the Immigration authorities, and the second the Saskatchewan Government. I suggest that you direct an inquiry to the Department of Mines and Resources, Immigration Branch, Ottawa, Ont., as to whether or not you would be permitted entry into Canada. You should then write the Department of Natural Resources, Govt. of the Province of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask., relative to the purchasing of land and/or the filing of a homestead.

Regarding the trapping angle, I may here be able to give you a bit of information. Most professional trappers operate in that part of Saskatchewan where fur properly abounds, i.e., the northern part of the Province. But, unfortunately, this would be "out" for you. The regulations demand that trapping in that part of the counry may only be carried out by permit, and permits are only issued to a person who has been a resident of that particular area for five years immediately preceding the application for a permit. This means that you would have to obtain a livelihood by some means other than trapping for a period of five years.

Of course, there is a trapping country of sorts closer in. I doubt not that you could find many a settler within forty miles north of this city who would be highly pleased to sell out his proved-up homestead and get out; but if you went into this sort of thing, you should look forward to a pretty strenuous life. While you would doubtless be able to trap a few foxes, brush-wolves, timber-wolves, weasels, bear and skunk, you would have to have a substantial living on the side. You might go into cattle, seed a few acres of grain, cut hay and sell it or cut cordwood, but it isn't the sort of life I would recommend. It would, in fact, be pioneering all over again, and these days there are far easier ways of making a living than going at it as our forebears did.

Personally, I think you would find just as many good trapping prospects right in your own country. I've traveled the Southwestern States, and my personal dream is someday to be able to settle down in the foothill country of the Rockies and go in for exactly the same sort of thing as you have in mind. And if I may be permitted to say so, your letter makes me think of Robert W. Service's Sam McGee. Remember Sam McGee? He "was from Tennessee where the cotton blooms and grows; and why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole God only knows." The far North being "out" for you, my advice is to look around closer to California.

Regarding the raising of Angora rabbits, I am afraid I am unable to give you any great help, as I know of no one so engaged hereabouts. By what I recall, the Angora does not take kindly to severe weather, and we have plenty of this in Saskatchewan. Last winter fifty below was common, and the temperature reached fifty-eight on more than one occasion. Coupled with this were strong winds. Probably the little bush rabbit—the Arctic hares, too—found this somewhat trying, and my opinion is that unless you had heated buildings, the aristocratic Angora would probably yield up the ghost under conditions such as these.

OF ANIMAL music.

Request:—I have bird calls such as duck, turkey, crow, etc. and am interested in wild animal calls.

Can you tell me where I can buy a wildcat call or any other kind such as puma, mountain lion etc?

—J. V. Wells
Perryman, Md.

Reply by Arthur H. Carhart:—I presume what you are referring to is some sort of gadget, such as used in calling ducks, rather than the recorded calls of animals on a phonograph set-up.

It so happened that your letter came just as I was leaving for a medicine-talk with my good friend, Dorr Green, Chief of Predatory Animal and Rodent Control of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. When I got down to meet him, there were a half dozen other men of that division present, and I put the question you asked up to the bunch; there were three District Supervisors, three Regional Supervisors in the bunch; and if there were such calls made by any commercial outfit they should know of them. None did know of such calls.

One old trapper friend I queried, to follow the matter up farther, said he knew of two coyote calls, both homemade. The first was a shall piece of tubing in which a reed was fixed, something like that in a halloween horn. Used in a certain way, a man could imitate a rabbit in distress, and attract a coyote. The other was a coyote call; a short tube again, about an inch inside diameter, blown on with the lips like a "bazooka," which would imitate a coyote's howling. I don't know of any such calls in existence on a commercial basis but I have two other sources of information to tap that might know of any such gadget if it exists. If I find anything further, I'll let you know.

As for either bob-cats or mountain lions, also called puma, cougar, painter, etc., they make little noise. There are lots of stories about the "screaming." I'm not saying; I never heard one scream. Under some circumstances my guess is that they do yowl; but rarely. And I don't think any "call" figures in their hunting as in the case of the wolf and coyote.

There was a Tewa Indian I knew, who could do a good job with his voice, calling a wolf or a coyote, calling crows, and other wild things. But he did that with his voice. A rancher friend of mine over on the Fryingpan can duplicate the sound made by a bull elk when in the rut. But that was voice and whistling.

Fact is, larger animals that call or "sound off" when hunting, that are found in most of the states, are limited to wolf, coyote, and fox. Big game, the bull elk, makes his "bugle" during the rut. So, in the first place, you're running into a class generally not "calling" much, with these exceptions, and probably no market for the ingenious inventor if he did rig up a gadget that would imitate a coyote, wolf, fox or elk.

(Continued on page 138)

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon)*

Notice: Many of our *Ask Adventure* experts are now engaged in government service of one kind or another. Some are on active duty in the Army or Navy, others serving in an executive or advisory capacity on various of the boards and offices that have been set up to hasten the nation's war effort. Almost without exception these men have consented to remain on our staff, carry on their work for the magazine if humanly possible, but with the understanding that for the duration such work is of secondary importance to their official duties. This is as it should be, so when you don't receive answers to queries as promptly as you have in the past, please be patient. And remember that foreign mails are slow and uncertain these days, many curtailed drastically. Bear with us and we'll continue to try to serve you as speedily as possible.

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure*.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure*.

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure*.

Boxing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, 1619 Mass. Ave. N.W., Wash., D. C.

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing: *Paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 1325 So. Main St., Princeton, Ill.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure*.

Fencing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, 1619 Mass. Ave. N.W., Wash., D. C.

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.

Fishing: *Fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait, camping outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure*.

Fly and Bait Casting, Tournament—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Globe-trotting and Vagabonding—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure*.

Health-Building Activities, Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, 432 Old Farm Rd., Wyncote, Penna.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson Ave., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old-Time Sailoring—CHAS. H. HALL, care of *Adventure*.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *Foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign: Wing Shooting and Field Trails—ROY S. TINNEY, care of *Adventure*.

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure*.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MUREL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave. N. Y., N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 6720 Jeffery Ave., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

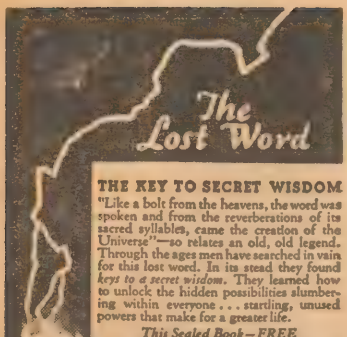
Aviation: *Airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders*—MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure*.

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, 1091 Springdale Rd., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.



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Sawmilling—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure.*

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESENBERG, care of *Adventure.*

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 156 Joralemon St., Belleville, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

Federal Investigation Activities: *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure.*

The Merchant Marine—GORDON MACALLISTER, care of *Adventure.*

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—ALEC CAVADAS, King Edward High School, Vancouver, B. C.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*

U. S. Marine Corps—MAJOR F. W. HOPKINS, care of *Adventure.*

U. S. Navy—LIEUTENANT DURAND KIEFER, care of *Adventure.*

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure.*

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Ingle Nook," 39 Cornelia St., Wiley Park, N. S. W., Australia.

Hawaii—JOHN SNELL, Deputy Administrator, Defense Savings Staff, 1055 Bishop St., Honolulu, T. H.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** *Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya*—GORDON MACCREAGH, 2231 W. Harbor Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure.* **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure.* **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban, Natal, So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDLE, care of *Adventure*. **2** *French Indo-China, Hong Kong, Macao, Tibet; Southern, Eastern and Central China*—SEWARD S. CRAMER, care of *Adventure*. **3** *Northern China and Mongolia*—PAUL H. FRANSON, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Persia, Arabia*.—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

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★**West Indies**—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

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Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **3** ★*Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, *The Courier Advocate*, Trenton Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping*.—A. D. L. ROBINSON, 1261 Ouelette Ave., Windsor, Ont., Canada. **5**★*Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C. **6** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501—10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask.

Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson Ave., Hollywood, Calif.

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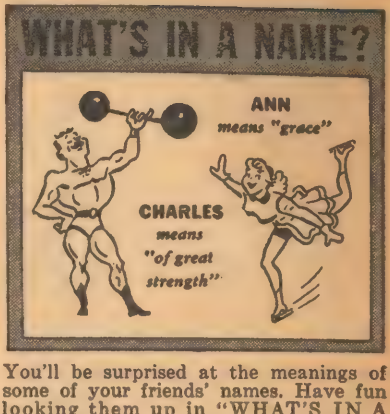
Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, 40 Chapel St., Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif. **4** New Jersey—F. H. BENT, care of *Adventure*. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla. Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*. **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.



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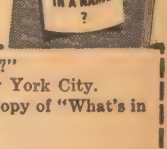

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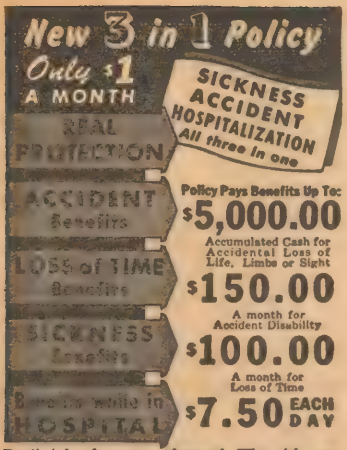

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(Continued from page 134)

Not much help; but that's the best information I can give you. If you're interested, you might be able to locate phonograph records of some of these calls, and see if you can rig anything that would approximate the recording.

WOOD for a bow and wax for a string.

Request:—As a very interested Archery fan, situated in a section of the country where clubs are scarce and expert advice is nil, I have some questions I would be very much obliged if you would answer for me. First of all my knowledge is very limited, but being interested also in the making of equipment, I find myself hard pressed for a suitable item which I know must be in common use although I don't know of it.

(1) What is the mixture for bowstring wax?
(2) Is it possible to obtain Osage Orange staves in Canada? Where?
(3) Now that metal arrow tips are off the market what is the best substitute?
(4) How long should hickory be steamed to recurve a bow?

—W. McKenzie
406-11th Street
Medicine Hat, Alberta.

Reply by Earl B. Powell:—For bowstring wax I usually use about one part of rosin to seven of wax. It needs but a touch of rosin.

I don't know if there is any Osage Orange grown in Canada or not. I have seen it in New York and Pennsylvania, and elsewhere although its native habitat is in an area comprising the western parts of Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma and northeast Texas, with some extensions into other sections of the south. You can obtain it from several of the American makers at a reasonable price. Some fine Yew wood grows in Canada. I have seen some on Vancouver Island north of Victoria.

You can also get metal points from several of the makers of tackle, but they have dwindling stocks. Plastic has been used for a substitute, but is almost worthless on account of lack of weight and breakage, etc.

Hickory or other woods can be steamed or boiled about half an hour. Steaming takes longer, but boiling takes about half an hour for recurving.

SPEED-SWIMMING under water.

Query:—One of our boys has swum 78 yards under water and we believe this is a record performance. Can you tell me what is the recognized world record? Another thing, is the breast stroke best for underwater swimming?

—William Barron
Co. B., 325th Med. Bn.
APO #100, Fort Jackson, S. C.

Reply by L. de B. Handley:—No official world's record for underwater swimming is listed, but our National A.A.U. lists an American record of more than 100 yards.

Although the breast stroke generally is used for underwater swimming, it is not the fastest. Some years ago I saw Victor Kiffee, a Brooklyn

racing man, cover 50 yards under water in 25 seconds, and he used a combination of the crawl leg thrash and a sculling motion of the hands, with hands held close to thighs. As the national record for 50 yards breast stroke stands at 28.8 seconds, you will see that Kiffee's method develops greater speed.

Undoubtedly, too, a combination of the breast arm stroke and the crawl leg thrash is faster than the orthodox breast stroke.

LEAD for muzzle loaders.

Request:—I am a muzzle loading nut and so to get some lead cheap, I have from time to time gone to a nearby Army rifle range and picked up the spent bullets behind the target butts. I have about five hundred pounds so far, in fact enough to last me a lifetime. I have melted it into ingots and when I go to work it up into bullets, I notice that when cool the top of the lead in the kettle tends to turn a peculiar gray color and gets small cracks in it. It also is hard to mould. Have you any suggestions as to an oil flux that might make it work up better? Do you know what the composition of the inside of the Army bullets is? It is real soft and I thought it might be pure lead. Is the .22-bullet pure lead or is it a mixture of lead, tin and/or antimony? Will appreciate your help.

You would be surprised as to how much lead comes out of a small amount of the spent Army bullets. The new M-2 amm. for the officer's carbine really gives up plenty as they don't have enough oomph to distort when they hit the ground and so it is much easier to work up. When I stop to think how much is being thrown away every day it makes me sick. How about a salvage company after the war to work the training camps? We might not get rich but boy, would we have lead!

—R. E. Ware
Clemson Agricultural College
Clemson, S. C.

Reply by Donnegan Wiggins:—About that lead that shows cracks in the ingots after melting down; just add a little beeswax, a bit the size of a chestnut to each pot of lead when melted, stirring it in well and being careful not to let it ignite indoors, and I think you will find the cracks no longer present.

I do a lot of hand-loading, particularly for my revolvers, and find the same trouble. But the beeswax or at a pinch, paraffin wax as used on fruit jars, will chase the trouble away every time. Makes the lead work out much more easily, when running bullets, as well.

I've not fired my muzzle-loading rifles for years; shall try my Kentucky flintlock rifle when I can get a new spring for the set trigger. Have done a bit with the old Colt and Remington cap-and-ball revolvers, though. Find them reliable for the first cylinder load, save for the long ignition, as compared with metallic cartridges.

I understand the Government, through the Ordnance Department, now mines the butts for the fired bullets, thus saving the lead, and salvaging the jacket material as well. I get my own lead from old water pipes, and old auto batteries, as well as the .22 target butts.

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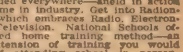

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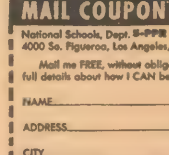

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Robert Limbach, the best pal I ever had, last heard from in the Merchant Marine, please write me. Robert Wallish, 3522 W. 12th Place, Chicago, 23, Ill.

Earl Chew, formerly of Troop "B" 4th U. S. Cavalry, last heard of was a motorman on streetcars in Indianapolis, Ind. Get in touch with your old pal "Chink," otherwise Horace M. Henninger, 905 Irving St., N. E., 17 Washington, D. C.

George Kullrich, electrician by trade, home in State of Washington, whom I met in 1913 in Miles City, Mont., and corresponded with later at Verdi and Reno, Nev. Any information will be appreciated by Fin. Write me c/o *Adventure*.

Will anyone knowing the whereabouts of Robert Lipp, last known to be headed for Seattle, Wash., about July 4, 1942, please communicate with Larry Richmond, C-2 2nd Airdrome Bn. FMF, Fleet P. O., San Francisco, Calif.

Anyone knowing of the whereabouts of Thomas H. Dobbs, aged 71, 5 feet 9½, curly hair, blue eyes, was a prospector in Utah, Washington and Arizona, spent some time in Pocatello, Idaho, please communicate with his brother, John R. Dobbs, Morristown Post Office, Arizona.

Any oldtimer who can recall the name or the name and address of the pharmacist's mate who ran the sick bay at Main Barracks, Yerba Buena Naval Station, (Goat Island or Boat Hill to the gobs), during the Fall of 1918 will do a great favor by informing Bill Gianella, 1042 59th St., Oakland, 8, Calif.

Any information as to the whereabouts of Rochus Cofer of Smithfield, Va., last heard of eleven years ago, will be appreciated by his brother, John M. Cofer, 124 N. North Carolina Ave., Atlantic City, N. J.

William J. Smith, age 51 years, light blue eyes, dark brown hair, height 6 ft., last heard of in State of Washington. He was born in Montesano, Wash., and spent school days in Grants Pass, Ore. Anyone knowing his whereabouts please communicate with his brother-in-law, C. E. Baker, 968 Neilson St., Berkeley 6, Calif.

Albert R. Gately—the best pal I ever had—was last heard from in Missouri. I would like to locate him. Anyone knowing his whereabouts write Morton A. Richard, 1213 N. 24 St., Phoenix, Ariz.

Louis Sixt, probably known as Bob Six, last heard of in Gananoque, Ont. and Vancouver, B. C. Age about 26, height 4' 10", weight 135 lbs., gray eyes, back-brushed straight brown hair. Scrapper, gambler, seafaring man. Anyone having knowledge of his whereabouts please write his brother Paul Sixt, c/o *Adventure*.

Max Kennison Todd, please communicate with your grandson, Donald Todd, Rt. 13, Box 781 A, Houston, Texas.

Would appreciate any information regarding James Eischeid, native of Iowa. He is my father and have not heard from him for more than 15 years. He has mechanical engineering training and is also interested in aviation. Also has a decided lust for travel. Any clue to his whereabouts would be of great value to me. Please address any information to Cpl. E. D. Eischeid, USMC, H & S Btry.-9th Def. Bn.-F.M.F. c/o The Fleet Postoffice, San Francisco, Calif.

Leroy "Jack" Miles, age 21, height 5' 10½", weight 145 lbs. Eyes brown with inflamed iris; hair-sandy; complexion bronzed and freckled. Last heard of June 5, 1942 at Santa Fe, New Mexico. His home was originally at Hereford, Texas, but cannot be located. Please notify Rexford C. Miles, Box 389, Morenci, Arizona.

Jim "High" Thompson, Gen. Del., Woodland, Calif., would like to hear from some of his old friends in New York City, performers, agents and others.

I would like to hear from John Rueben Sharp who was in the Marine Corps at Parris Island, S. C. 1919-1923. He used to live in St. Joseph and Kansas City, Mo. Stf. Sgt. Newton Tushoph, U.S.M.C., Navy 107, Fleet P. O., New York City, N. Y.

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(Continued from page 51)

day fairly shuddered now when he thought of walking past that spot where they used to stand. Hitherto he had been able to avoid it. This was his first turn as officer of the day.

When he saw a soldier duck around the back of the rudder house he quickened his pace.

He found a poker game. It was obvious that the men had been playing for money. He knew this from their faces, and from the fact that a lookout had been posted. But no cash was in sight; and there were not even matchsticks. The men, seven in number, did not make any attempt to hide the cards. Only the lookout was standing.

"Gambling?"

They would lie, of course. And if he brought charges, they would all solemnly deny that they'd been playing for money.

"No, sir." It was a corporal. "Just a friendly game."

"Stand at attention when you're addressed!"

"Yes, sir."

"You threw a cigarette over the rail as I came up. You know the regulation. A cigarette might blow back through an open port hole and start a fire—endanger the life of every man on this ship."

He got out his notebook and pen.

"Well, I thought back here at the back of the ship—"

"Makes no difference. A regulation is a regulation. Name?"

When he left them, to start forward on the other side of the ship, he was obliged to walk over the exact spot where he and Hallie used to stand. His throat stung, and all his skin tingled with the heat of agony. For an instant he was choked, a blind man. His muscles moved, so that he continued to walk; but that was automatic.

"Son of a bitch!" The man who was going to have to report for E. D. hitched his lifebelt over a shoulder and paid the seven dollars he owed. "He's got no more heart than a rock! Absolutely no heart at all!"

THE END

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(Continued from page 131)

for them in foreign parts. He was a good, tough hombre. It was against the law then for an American to carry a gun without a permit from Mexico City. One time we ran a tool-pusher alongside a little open-air cantina where a bunch of Mexicans were getting drunk. Hell, they *were* drunk. Rich was dark-haired, black-eyed and mustached. A young Mexican leaned over the car, and in Spanish insisted that Rich was Mexican. He became a nuisance, and Rich told him so. A minute later I spotted the Mexican on his horse, a few feet away, drawing his machete. The Mexican rode up on Rich's side of the car, underneath the thatched room which extended out over the bar. That instant a pistol which I'd never known Rich carried, appeared as though by magic on the seat between us. I hopped out my side, just as the Mexican swung his machete up and back preparatory to a swipe at Rich. It stuck in the roof just long enough for me to drag him off his horse from the rear. Well, one thing led to another and we got out of there and very shortly thereafter I found it advisable to leave Tampico on a Ward Line freighter with some secrecy and without wasting any time.

That all sounds a little more sensational than it really was, but in those days, as you know, Americans were not popular.

Men who were my intimates and sponsors down there and whom you might remember were Roy Donaldson, Terminal Superintendent for Texas; John G. Towns, backing a new oil cracking process to redeem the oil in those sumps. I've forgotten the last names of such as Salty and Tex and other minor officials around the pumping stations and also the name of the new but very nice head of Texas interests in Mexico. Kid Moore I've mentioned.

One of these days I'm going to sit down and ask *Adventure* if it doesn't like the idea of a yarn featuring the real Monte Michaels and his understandable career on the downgrade, climaxed by that railroad disaster you mention, as a believable and somehow pitiful villain.

Thanks a great deal for your letter. I am glad that you enjoyed the story, and perhaps you will enjoy the picture based on it: "In Old Oklahoma." Due to wartime restrictions and other factors, the climax is changed, but it's worth seeing.

Cordially yours,
—Thomson Burtis

And finally the following reply from the Pittsburgh ex-oil man—

My dear Mr. Burtis:

Your letter of the 8th was as interesting as your story, particularly the psychological angle. I am quite sure your explanation is the correct one.

If you obtained your information from Kid Moore, it was accurate. I knew both Kid Moore and his son, "Young Kid," although not intimately; they were from around Parkersburg, West Virginia, and were close friends of the Staats brothers, another famous drilling team

(Continued on page 146)

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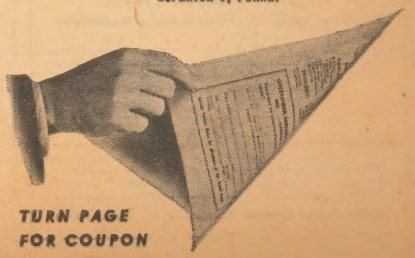

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(Continued from page 143)

also from Parkersburg. I dressed tools for Tona Staats on the well in question. I do not remember whether or not Kid Moore was around the fire, but he certainly was in a position to get accurate information about the details.

Quite probably the reason the well fires made such an impression on your mind was that these were the first big fires that were extinguished within a few days after their ignition. Prior to this time fires were dreaded (they still are) because of the terrific task of putting them out, due primarily to inadequate equipment. These wells were equipped with the first lot of high pressure valves ever used. They were of cast iron and tested to 2500 lbs. per sq. inch. Modern valves are now available made from cast steel and tested to 10,000 lbs. per sq. inch. The technique of the water lines and getting in to the valve removed a very definite hazard. No wonder the boys so emphasized it in their conversations that it remained with you all these years.

With regard to the shields: They were used to provide a leeward side from the heat—not to shelter from a rain of oil. The oil was flowing from eight-inch casing; the pressure was such that the oil did not ignite until it was forty or fifty feet above the valve. It was like a gigantic Bunsen burner and the same principle of physics applied here, too—hence the cool air.

I hope you can interest *Adventure* in the story you suggest about the Tampico boom. The Klondike and the mining camps have been written up for many years, but men who knew both mining camps and Tampico claimed that the latter was in a class by itself. Things happened down there that are absolutely unbelievable. The real story of Monte Michaels describing him as you suggest should be extremely interesting. Monte was a hard man but he was not a vicious one; in a way he resembled a character in a Greek tragedy with inexorable doom following him.

Sincerely yours,
—G. E. Niver, Manager
Commercial Research Department

Adventure, we hasten to report, is very much interested in the idea of more oil-field yarns by Mr. Burtis with Monte Michaels as a character. We hope to be able to announce one soon.—K. S. W.

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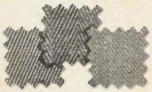

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